(Continued from front flap)

The book intends to put to light the fact that mankind is fed up with man-made art of living and that they are in a constant search for a God-made art of living. The book intends to inform the public the undeniable fact that men and women are exponentially converting to Islam. It also highlights the fact that Islam is the fastest growing religion.

The author hopes that the readers will ask themselves this valuable question: Why do they convert to Islam? . . . and of course to genuinely search for answers!

About 1430 years ago Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam said:

"This matter (Islam) will reach as far as the day and night reach, and God will not leave any house of mud/brick or tent (i.e. no city nor remote area) but He will bring this religion into it"

Muhammad also said:

"Verily Allah has shown me the eastern and western part of the earth, and I saw the authority of my Ummah (Nation) dominate all that I saw."

He Also Said:

". . . I was given the keys of the earth . . . and my Nation was made the best Nation."

Salim Omar, born in the Coast of Kenya graduated from the University of Nairobi in 2006 with a BA in Political Science and Sociology. He was born an artist; a God-endowed talent which helped him see what ordinary people don't get to see. Painting is one of his favorite activities. His forthcoming book "Between Mars and Venus" is predicted to bring about ideological revolution and a historic mass change.

"If you are ready to face the hard facts, read it! . . . to be smart or ignorant - the choice is yours. Whatever your option, the way you will look at Islam will never be the same again"
~ Ole Naado, Founder and CEO of *The New Dawn*

"With this book, people will really think"
~ Sabine Kuesshauer, M.A. Student, Dept. of Political Science, University of Leipzig, German

"The book is so interesting. I just can't afford to put it down!"
~ Elizabeth Jerop, MA student, University of Nairobi doing Gender and Development Studies

"This book will set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."
~ Chelang'at Chepkwony, Accountant, Hass Petroleum Ltd.

"Salim Boss has done it! This book is evolutionary in setting a direction for our prejudiced world. Likely to change your deepest held convictions about Islam."
~ Billow Kerrow
Former Shadow Finance Minister & Member of Parliament, Kenya.
Currently, he is an Advisory Board member for Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission.

They are either Extremely Smart or Extremely Ignorant will make readers doubt whether they had been smart in the first place. The book unravels the current phenomenon of conversions to Islam and profiles some of the noteworthy Muslim Converts. Those who thought that Islam is a religion of Arabs, Swahilis, Somalis or Asians will be shocked to see men and women hailing from all races, unprecedentedly flocking to the highly underestimated, least understood, terror-bound and highly talked-about religion. This book portrays the diversity of converts to Islam, from all walks of life; from intellectuals to millionaires, to middle-class people; from whites to blacks, men and women – all are subscribing to Islam.

The book magnifies the threat of Islamic domination highly feared by the capitalist world. We've started hearing authors elucidating on the prospect of Europe becoming "Eurabia"! Others highlight the danger of Islamic Supremacism! Then we hear the call for prayer (Adhan) about to reverberate over the English city of Oxford on loudspeakers! The Sharia law in secular governments with the Archbishop of Canterbury urging Britons to just accept the coming of Sharia in the UK! Shariah Compliant Finance booming! In 2007, Muhammad was ranked #2 most popular name for baby boys born in Britain with Jack taking the first position! In Brussels, Mohammed has been the most popular name for a number of years! Muslims having more decisive voice in the makeup of European governments! Non-Muslim Presidential candidates wearing Islamic attires during campaigns! Funny enough 'Hussein' sleeps in the White House! Then Prof. Ali Mazrui saying ". . . perhaps we can prophesize that in another 40 years the US will at last have a Muslim president!" President Obama's Inaugural speech: "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect." Professor Paul Goble predicting Russian Army to become a Muslim–Majority Army by 2015–2020. Before we forget, spontaneous outbursts of indignation all over the Muslim world just because of depiction of Muhammad in a cartoon! Osama Bin Laden becoming more elusive with Europeans joining Al-Qaida! And there is also the awaited birth of clash of civilizations! We often see Adverts having Muslim–looking–like characters! Halal chicken in Supermarkets! . . . And so on. Is 'The New Islamic Order looming'

The myriad conversions to Islam bring Sir George Bernard Shaw's prophecy close to reality when he proclaimed: "If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam." Just the way Samuel Huntington foresees."Muslims in the world will continue to increase dramatically, amounting to 20 percent of the world's population about the turn of the [21st] century, surpassing the number of Christians some years later . . . ." And if that is not enough, Bernard Lewis, a historian and the recipient of AEI's Irving Kristol Award for 2007 made his prediction in 2004 that Europe would be Islamic by the end of the century.

This book creates a context in which to think about the world's most newsworthy religion, Islam – its authenticity, what benefits it can offer both in this transient earthly life and the infinite–life–after–death, and provides the reader with a desire to seriously know "What's wrong with my religion – my fellow followers - are dumping it at an accelerated speed?" The book echoes Malcolm X's statement, "People don't realize how a man's whole life can be changed by one book" because this is that one book you need to read before you die.

They are either Extremely Smart or Extremely Ignorant

SALIM BOSS

"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." [Jeremiah 29:13]

They are either

EXTREMELY SMART OR EXTREMELY IGNORANT

SALIM BOSS

Your Life could be changed

They are either
Extremely Smart or Extremely Ignorant

By Salim Boss

The author's message is for people to do some smart-thinking and not just to accept beliefs forced down their throats by their parents, religious leaders and the environment. He is appealing to the masses to shun cranial laziness and instead, use- think-it -yourself principle and not the attitude of "can-someone-think-for-me-coz-I-ll-get-tired-if-I-do-it-myself."

The book profiles notable converts together with some of their reasons for embracing Islam. Driven by William Wordsworth's quotation: "Come forth into the light of things Let nature be your teacher", the author successfully and ingeniously used reality of nature to untie religious dilemmas.

In an easy-to-read style, peppered with illustrations, real people's pictures, logical explanations, true-life stories, and verifiable references, the author successfully and unambiguously proves his point to the readers.

(Continued on back flap)

They are either

Extremely Smart

Or

Extremely Ignorant

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Written, compiled and edited by Salim Omar Kenga

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www.extremelysmart.wordpress.com

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Texts of Scripture quoted in this book appear in the following format:

The Bible: Blue
Qur'an: Purple
Hadith / Words of Muhammad: Green

"The most dangerous people are the ignorant"

~Henry Ward Beecher* (1813 –1887)~

* He was a clergyman and social reformer. He was, in fact, America's most famous preacher.

"I take refuge with God, lest I should be one of the ignorant."[1]

~ Moses ~

1. Qur'an 2:67 from The Koran Interpreted A Translation by A. J. Arberry

“Life happened because I turned the pages”

~ Alberto Manguel ~

[A History of Reading, 1996]

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Preface

Many Non-Muslims (Jews, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Atheist . . .) have never understood—and in some cases, have not tried to objectively understand—the rationales, beliefs, practices and scriptures of the other religious groups. This renders them unaware of the truth- if any- of other religions. This is the nature of events, as portrayed by an early scholar in the Arabian desert, Ali ibn Abi Talib, who said: "if one is ignorant of a matter one easily becomes opposed to it." And how sad when people are purposefully oblivious to a matter which is actually important for themselves. People who "knoweth not what" will always make loud gibberish accusations against those who may be walking in the straight path. Just like the foolish woman in proverbs 9:13-15, "The foolish woman is loud; she is ignorant and knows nothing. She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the high places of the town, calling to those who pass by, who are going straight on their way." An illustration of how people are unaware of their own beliefs let alone of others is when George Gallup, a leading Evangelical and a premier pollster describe America as "a nation of biblical illiterates." One Gallup survey found that less than half of Americans can name the first book of the Bible (i.e. Genesis), sixty percent cannot name half of the Ten Commandments and half think Noah was married to Joan of Arc.[2] And you may also want to hear a parallel example from Dr. Bart Ehrman who is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and who is also a leading authority on the Bible and the life of Jesus. Every year Dr. Ehrman would ask his undergraduate classes about their views of the Bible, and he would amazingly get the same response. He says:

> The first day of class, with over three hundred students present, I ask: "How many of you would agree with the proposition that the Bible is the inspired Word of God?" Whoosh! Virtually everyone in the auditorium raises their hand. I then ask, "How many of you have read one or more of the Harry Potter books?" Whoosh! The whole auditorium. Then I ask, "And how many of you have read the entire Bible." Scattered hands, a few students here and there. [3]

If that is the trend, how sure are we that we aren't ignorant of Islamic Faith? And before proceeding with the reading, it is vital to remind ourselves of the definitions of the term "ignorant." The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines Ignorant as: (a) lacking knowledge or comprehension of the thing specified. (b) Resulting from or showing lack of knowledge or intelligence. This book has relentlessly exposed those people who are wasting their lives by being intentionally ignorant on very crucial, must-know facets of life. Craig R. Smith is an author, commentator and CEO of Swiss America Trading Corporation, an investment firm specializing in U.S. gold and silver coins. He says that "to be ignorant, one must be willing to openly ignore the facts." Just the way Craig Smith said, "to ignore the facts as they are presented produces ignorant people. . . ."[4],similarly in this book, ignorant people will know themselves in the way they struggle to ignore any clear-cut facts presented.

---

2. "The Bible v the Koran, the battle of books." The Economist 22 Dec. 2007: p.60.
3. Ehrman, Bart D. Jesus, Interrupted. Kindle Edition. HarperCollins e-books, 2009.p.226.
4. Smith, Craig R. "America: An ignorant nation." wnd.com 13April 2009. <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?pageId=94749> retrieved 3/01/2010

Bemusing as it is, when a non-Muslim studies Islam and decides to convert, the rest perceive him/her as a lost sheep, traitor, delusional fool, opprobrious, eccentric, confused, bewitched, psycho, cracked-up, turd, inglorious sucker, masochistic and extremely ignorant - to say the least. Now, who is truly ignorant and who is smart? This is what the book is supposed to reveal. Will Rogers, puts it this way: "An ignorant person is one who doesn't know what you have just found out." To avoid being labeled ignorant, let us acquaint ourselves with what these converts have just discovered.

Since people of the world are broadly categorized as either ignorant or smart, the book clears the mist and gives the reader the strong vision to recognize and distinguish the ignorant from the smart. The book will help us analyze the cases of these converts, giving us the ground to judge them as either extremely smart or extremely ignorant and without taking the middle ground. I emphasize, this is neither a "beat about the bush" book nor is it a book about which a spade will be called a big fork. And of course, the book is meant to activate thinking and contemplation regarding the beliefs of that neighbor of yours! If it is true as others assert, that those non-Muslims who embraced Islam have taken an ignorant decision, then when *Guinness World Records 2003*, states: "In the period 1990-2000, approximately 12.5 million more people converted to Islam than to Christianity."[5], and when *St. Petersburg Times* writes: "Every year, about 20,000 people in the United States convert to Islam . . . ."[6], and after Samuel Huntington predicted that about the turn of the 21st century, Muslims will surpass the number of Christians,[7] then, we can confidently say that the world is tilting toward an ignorant majority.

Since truth is not a monopoly of anyone, the book cites from different sources such as the Bible, the Qu'ran, sayings of Prophet Muhammad, western and eastern thinkers and philosophers, laymen and even from Satan for Satan can sometimes tell the truth. I am told that Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam in one instance credited Satan for speaking the truth saying, "(In such an occasion) He (i.e. Satan) told you the truth, though he is (always) a liar . . . ."[7] And in the words of Shakespeare, "The devil can cite Scripture. . . ."[9] However, what is exalted in this book is anything that coincides with truth no matter who utters it. That is to say, we will go with Malcolm X's principle: "I'm for truth, no matter who tells it."

In this book, the Biblical quotes are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) simply because of the popularity of the text and from The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) because it enjoys the broadest acceptance of all Bible translations. Professor A. Guillaume acknowledged that the "The Qurān is one of the world's classics which cannot be translated without grave loss."[10] The same view was echoed by some Qur'an translators, such as Marmaduke Pickthall and Professor A. J. Arberry, who commented: "In choosing to call the present work The Koran Interpreted I have

5. Guinness World Records 2003. p. 102.

6. Wiener, Jocelyn (Times Staff Writer). "Young, Female and Muslim." St. Petersburg Times 7 Oct. 2002.

7. Huntington, Samuel P. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. pp. 65-66.

8. Bukhari, Vol. 4, bk.54, No. 495.

9. Shakespeare, William. The Merchant of Venice. Act I, Scene 3.

10. Guillaume, Alfred. Islam. Penguin Books, 1990. pp. 73-74.

conceded the relevancy of the orthodox Muslim view, of which Pickthall, for one, was so conscious, that the Koran is untranslatable."[11] On these grounds, the Qur'anic quotes employed in this book are taken from the Abdullah Yusuf Ali translation (i.e. The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary), the translations of Saheeh International and of the co-translators Muhammad Al-Hilali and Muhammad Khan (i.e., The Noble Qur'an). The rationale of using multiple translations is the fact that Arabic being a complex language becomes hard to translate with complete accuracy. We, therefore, hope that by using multiple translations, we may attempt to convey the meaning of the original.

The format of this book is designed to make it easily readable, enjoyable and un-problematically 'digestible.' Hence:

►Words or phrases in italics indicate emphasis by the author. Moreover, words highlighted with a yellow color indicate emphasis by the author. I mean something like, ". . .he did not want to trade away reason . . . ."
►Texts of Scripture quoted in this book appear in the following format:
The Bible: Blue
Qur'an: Purple
Hadith / Words of Muhammad: Green
►Whenever you see the letter Q as in [Q 11:46], it denotes Qur'an chapter eleven verse number forty-six.
►The quotations that present (scholarly) facts are cited accordingly whereas, motivational or rather inspirational quotations may not necessarily be cited. I mean commonsensical and truistic inspirational quotations such as "ignorance is the root of all evil."
►Significant explanatory notes and cross-references are supplied in the footnotes.
►Pictures are supplied since, "a picture is worth one thousand words."
►To forestall accusations of profiling fictitious converts, the references of each convert is provided after every story. This is a "substantiate-it-yourself" book.

Whenever great men of history such as Jesus or Muhammad are mentioned, respect should be accorded. On the mention of Jesus, Muslims normally tag along with "May peace be unto him" and with the mention of Muhammad, Muslims normally pray, "may peace and blessings be upon him". However, in this book, such designations will be omitted not because of impertinence but, in the spirit of co-existence, to be more sensitive to people of faiths outside of Islam. Only now we may say, "Praise the Lord."

The book is a scholarly affirmation of the phenomenon of conversions to Islam, others might see it as a proselytizing book but that is their judgment. The book is fraught with a plethora of facts and incontestable arguments but not emotionally charged sentences. Anyone willing to dismiss them by providing alternate sets of facts and arguments, I warmheartedly say to him/her, ". . . bring forth your proofs, if you are truthful." [Q 27:64] I can as well invite you saying, "Come now, and let us reason together. . . ." [Isaiah 1:18] The book is a call to dwellers of the earth to restructure

11. Arberry, A. J. The Koran Interpreted. A Touchstone book: Simon & Schuster, 1996. Preface, p. 24.

their plans on how to profit, both economically and otherwise, from the soon-to-come Muslim majority. Just like the 2009 President Obama's Inaugural speech: "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect."

Nairobi,
January, 2010.

Salim Omar Kenga

IMPORTANT NOTE

The recommended books, websites, videos, and other resources are only provided to prove the phenomenon of reversions to Islam. Any information or teaching contrary to the Islamic tenets - appearing in these resources- is in no way endorsed by the author. Any deviation that is or will be manifested by the profiled reverts is in no way lumped with Islam. "Whoever goes right, then he goes right only for the benefit of his ownself. And whoever goes astray, then he goes astray to his own loss. No one laden with burdens can bear another's burden . . . ." [Q 17:15]. Let everyone responsibly carry his own cross.

PART 1

THE CONVERTS

Part 1.1

The Fastest Growing Religion

It is the characteristic of Mushrooms to sprout very fast

*". . . Then I asked you whether his followers were increasing or decreasing. You replied that they were increasing. In fact, this is the result of true faith until it is complete (in all respects). I asked you whether there was anybody who, after embracing his religion, became displeased and renounced his religion; your reply was in the negative. In fact, this is the sign of true faith, for when its blessedness enters and mixes in the hearts completely, nobody will be displeased with it . . ."**

~ Heraclius, the Roman Emperor

The Fastest thinking mind

A thinking mind would definitely be alarmed by statements such as "Moslems are the world's fastest-growing group . . ."[1] which appeared in the most widely read paper in United States, *USA Today*. The critical mind would witness Hilary Rodham Clinton say, "Islam is the fastest-growing religion in America, a guide and pillar of stability for many of our people . . ."[2] and get concerned. After hearing BBC with Mike Wooldridge reporting that, "Islam is the world's fastest growing faith . . . ."[3], the person who thinks intelligently and logically will put forth a plausible hypothesis such as 'this religion could be a true one.' When he reads *The Junior Encyclopedia of Canada* the statement: "Islam is the fastest growing faith in the world"[4], he becomes contemplative, rational, forced to put prejudice aside and face the facts, even see Islam as a potential genuine alternative. ". . . the law of Mohammed has met with so unexampled a reception in the world . . . ."[5] is a statement written by George Sale, one of the first to translate the Qur'an into English, a self-professed antagonist of Muhammad and a hater of the Islamic religion. Adding that with, "No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam"[6], by the Pulitzer Prize-Winning Novelist James Michener, the highly prejudiced person may hear a conflicting voice whispering from his mind saying, "hey, just admit, once and for all, that there is something great in Islam." And when *The Economist* convey to the world that "Many Christian scholars predict that Islam will overtake Christianity as the world's fastest religion by 2050"[7] people observe silence, letting a moment of reflection to reign.

As if that is not enough, an excerpt taken from the January 2002 issue of the *National Geographic* magazine echoes that "A fifth of humankind follows Islam, the fastest growing and perhaps the most misunderstood religion on earth."[8]

---

* After interrogating Abu Sufyan (a non-Muslim) regarding the followers of Muhammad, Heraclius (Caesar) gave this verdict. [See Bukhari Vol.4, Bk. 52, No. 191.]

1. Kenny, Timothy. "Elsewhere in the World." USA Today Final Edition 17 Feb. 1989: p.4A.
2. Stammer, Larry B. (Times Religion Writer). "First Lady Breaks Ground With Muslims." Los Angeles Times Home Edition, Metro Section, Part B, 31 May 1996: p.3.
3. Wooldridge, Mike. "Islam: Faith under fire." news.bbc.co.uk 14 Sept. 2001. 11:17 GMT 12:17 UK. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1544071.stm>
4. The Junior Encyclopedia of Canada. Hurting Publishers, 1990. Vol. 2, p.396.
5. Sale, George. Preface. The Koran. London: C. Ackers, 1734. A2.
6. Michener, James A. "Islam: The Misunderstood Religion." Reader's Digest American Edition. May 1955: p. 73.
7. "The Bible v the Koran, the battle of books." The Economist 22 Dec. 2007: p.62.
8. Belt, Don. "The World of Islam." National Geographic Jan. 2002.

On 17 July 1997, the director of the *Christian Futures Network*, John Gary upon receiving the Earl Award at the World Future Society, reported the "Ten Global Trends in Religion" and in its third trend, he mentioned that "Among world religions, Islam ranks as the fastest growing faith . . . . in long-range statistical scenarios . . . it is possible that Islam will surpass Christianity in absolute number of adherents."[9] That's one prediction, but a fair-minded person will observe Islam in a respectful lens after reading another forecast by the renowned scholar Samuel Huntington predicting that:

> The percentage of Christians in the world . . . will probably approximate about 25 percent of the world population by 2025 . . . . Muslims in the world will continue to increase dramatically, amounting to 20 percent of the world's population about the turn of the (21st) century, surpassing the number of Christians some years later, and probably accounting for about 30 percent of the world's population by 2025.[10]

When *Guinness Book of Knowledge* admited that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world[11], any man of candor endowed with a fastest thinking mind would agree that Islam may come to dominate the world affairs. But finally, when the world's best-selling authority on astonishing facts and unparralleed human achievements, *Guinness World Records 2003* states that, "In the period 1990-2000, approximately 12.5 million more people converted to Islam than to Christianity", the highly inquisitive mind demands an explanation. The following is what *Guinness World Records 2003* recorded:

> Islam is the world's fastest-growing religion. In 1990, 935 million people were Muslims and this figure had escalated to around 1.2 billion by 2000, meaning that around one in five people follow Islam. Although the religion began in Arabia, by 2002 80% of all believers in Islam lived outside the Arab world. In the period 1990-2000, approximately 12.5 million more people converted to Islam than to Christianity.[12]

---

9. Gary, John. "Ten Global Trends in Religion." wnrf.org < http://www.wnrf.org/cms/tentrends.shtml> 17 July 1997.

10. Huntington, Samuel P. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. pp. 65-66.

11. Guinness Book of Knowledge. p.195. [For additional evidences for the fact that Islam is the rapidly growing religion, see: Baum, Geraldine. "For Love of Allah." Newsday Nassau and Suffolk Edition, Part II, 7 March 1989: p.4 ; Goldman, Ari L. "Mainstream Islam Rapidly Embraced by Black Americans." New York Times Late City Final Edition, 21 Feb. 1989: p.1; Kopel, Ted. Nightline ABC. April. 1998; Young, Gayle. "Fast-growing Islam winning converts in Western world." cnn.com 14 April 1997 <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9704/14/egypt.islam/> ; Blank, Jonah. "Islam is growing fast in America, and its members defy stereotypes." US News 12 July 1998. <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/980720/archive_004363.htm>; Seitz, Barr. "Fastest-Growing Religion Often Misunderstood." BICNews. ABC. 13 Dec. 1997; Robinson, B.A. "University Dispute re: Islamic Book." religioustolerance.org <http: //www.religioustolerance.org/isl_unc.htm.> 17 Aug. 2002 ; Ali, M.M. "Muslims in America: The Nation's Fastest Growing Religion." Washington Report on Middle East Affairs May/June 1996. pp. 13, 107.]

12. Guinness World Records 2003. p. 102. Also see Guinness World Records 2004 p.90. In its copyright page, there is a general warning which reads: "Attempting to break records or set new records can be dangerous. Appropriate advice should be taken first and all record attempts are undertaken entirely at the participant's risk. In no circumstances will Guiness world Records Limited have any liability for death or injury suffered in any record attempts." One may wonder: are those religions attempting to break the Islamic record as the fastest growing religion, undertaking it at their own risks!

In fact, Hermann Eilts (born 1922) former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Egypt who later joined Boston University as Distinguished Professor of International Relations, and there became chairman of the Department of Political Science and later chairman of the Department of International Relations had this to say:

> The Muslim community of the globe today is in the neighborhood of one billion.* That is an impressive figure. But what to me is equally impressive is that Islam today is the fastest growing monotheistic religion. This is something we have to take into account. Something is right about Islam. It is attracting a good many people.[13]

They are either smart or Ignorant

Now, why would these many people, as we shall see, abandon their faiths and embrace Islam, despite the uphill battle of adhering to such a strict religion and the harsh consequences thereafter. Didn't these converts see Sharia law as discriminatory, cruel and barbaric? Don't they see Islam as the strictest religion and incompatible with the world order? One has to rise before dawn to observe the first of the five daily prayers! Fasting a whole month every year! Traveling to Saudi Arabia for Hajj at least once in their lifetime, despite the stampedes! And while on Hajj they have to stone the devil! A woman has to cover herself from head to toe, regardless of her beautiful legs and the sweltering weather! And if you are a woman, your Muslim husband might proudly bring another wife. Islam gives him unconditional right to marry up to four! You will also be terrified to learn that in Islam the husband has a scriptural right to use corporal punishment against a disobedient wife [Q 4: 34]. One would query: "Aren't these women converts not fazed with being mummified with the head-to-toe garments and what if her polygamist husband impregnates her with sextuplets?"

Being a Muslim means giving *zakat* (charity). That is 2.5% of your annual savings every year goes to the poor! And dare to steal; your hand is cut off! [Q 5:38] We've been bombarded with a plethora of alcohol adverts and then the Qur'an tells us that alcohol is ". . . Satan's handiwork . . . ." [Q 5:90], and thus to be shunned. Before you could recover from shock, you are told that your favorite bacon sandwich /ham is forbidden in Islam! A religion piloted by Muhammad, ". . . the Prophet who can neither read nor write . . . ." [Q 7:157] Will they emulate Muhammad, their role model by cleaning their teeth with a frayed twig brush (*miswak*)! How can these tolerant, peace-loving people follow a prophet who revealed, ". . . I have been made victorious with terror. . . ."[14] The same victorious man is igniting the spirit of Jihad against the enemies of Islam ever since Allah gave the command, "O Prophet, urge the believers to battle." [Q 8:65].

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* That was June 24, 1985 when Hermann Eilts uttered that Muslims are in the neighborhood of one billion. Currently there are 1.5 billion Muslims. See, "The Bible v the Koran, the battle of books." The Economist 22 Dec. 2007.p.62. Also see "Major Religions of the World Ranked by Number of Adherents." adherents.com <http://www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html> last retrieved 2 June 2009.;and according to *Time* magazine, "One reason for the rise of the halal economy is that the world's *1.6 billion Muslims* are younger and, in some places at least, richer than ever." See Power, Carla. "Halal: Buying Muslim." Time 25 May 2009. p.38. Furthermore, *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life* did a comprehensive study in 2009 and found that the world Muslim Population has reached 1.57 billion. See Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. "Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population." 8 Oct. 2009; Beaumont, Peter. "One in four people is Muslim, says study." Guardian 8 Oct. 2009.

13. In an address to committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the US Congress June 24, 1985

14. Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 52, No. 220.

Aren't they aware that "Muhammad has generated more fear, hate, and sheer contempt in the Christian world than any person in history."[15]

Why on earth are these converts worshipping a Muslim God who said, "I will cast terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved. . . ."[Q 8:12] and as if this is not scary enough, the same God commands Muslims in the battlefield to ". . . strike them (disbelievers) over the necks, and smite over all their fingers and toes." [Q 8:12] Why all that torture? "This is because they defied and disobeyed Allâh and His Messenger (i.e. Muhammad)" [Q 8:13], says the God of Muhammad. And it is not to be forgotten that the world, from the point of view of Islam, is divided into the "House of Islam *(Dar al-Islam)*" and the "House of War *(Dar al-harb)*." Such a division would make one wonder: is Islam a religion of conquest? To make things appear worse, those who embraced Islam are supposed to develop the conviction that their non-Muslim relatives and friends are no more than Kafirs*

If you become a Muslim, you are 'baptized' with a new name: Terrorist! Converting to Islam means incurring the wrath and displeasure of family, friends, society, government and the international community! Sometimes losing the respect and reputation and probably losing your job! Why would these men and women choose to cuddle a religion increasingly associated with dictatorial governments, mass terrorism, videotaped beheadings, oppression of women, sword-spread faith and global jihad? And interestingly enough, the Shariah prescribes death penalty for apostates just because Muhammad said: "If somebody (a Muslim) discards his religion, kill him."[16]

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15. Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.p. 54

* Kafir means one who rejects. In Islamic terminology, Kafir means one who conceals or rejects the truth of Islam (in English 'non-Muslim'). So in simple terms, Kafir means rejecter. Haven't you, at some point in your life, refused to read the Qur'an or Islamic books or listening to Islamic preaching. Is that not rejecting? So if you reject reading the Qur'an, why do you complain when a Muslim calls you a rejecter (i.e. Kafir)? Now, after you decided to read the Qur'an, you may come across undeniable facts that appeal to reason and logic, and if you refuse to accept these facts, aren't you a rejecter again? It is worth-mentioning that a 'Muslim' who does not believe in Jesus Christ is a Kafir [Rejecter of Jesus after he has clearly been mentioned in the Word of God (Qur'an and in the Gospels)]. Muslims wonder, why then other faiths feel insulted when they are referred as Kafir yet they don't believe in Muhammad! What if the non-Christians are described as Kafirs by God (in the Bible)! Will the Christians quarrel with their God? God referred the non-Muslims as Kafir in the Qur'an. The issue is to investigate if the Qur'an is truly the Word of God, if it is then, ". . . Does the clay say to the one who fashions it, "What are you making"? or "Your work has no handles" [Isaiah 45:9]. Amazingly, the Qur'an foretells that, in the Day of Judgment, the non-Muslims will admit and proclaim against themselves as Kafir. The verse reads: "O company of jinn and mankind, did there not come to you messengers from among you, relating to you My verses and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?" They will say, "We bear witness against ourselves"; and the worldly life had deluded them, and they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers (Kafirs)." [Q 6: 130. Also see Q 7:37] The eighth-century prophet Amos calls those who violate God's laws as "cows" [Amos 4:1] prophet Jeremiah calls such people "scoundrels" [Jeremiah 5:26]. Jesus calls evil people "You brood of vipers!" [Matthew 12:34], in another place he calls them "a wicked and adulterous generation." [Mathew 16:4] Muslims pity infidels for violating many of God's commands, and instead of calling them "cows", "scoundrels", "brood of vipers", "wicked and adulterous" they just become tolerant by calling them just Kaafirs [Rejectors].

16. Bukhari, Vol. 4, Bk. 52, No. 260. Also see Bukhari Vol. 9, Bk. 83, No. 17. And according to Bukhari Vol. 9, Bk. 89, No. 271, there was a man who embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism. Mu'adh bin Jabal a disciple of Muhammad happened to see the man with Abu Musa, another disciple of Muhammad. Mu'adh asked, "What is wrong with this (man)?" Abu Musa replied, "He embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism." Mu'adh said, "I will not sit down unless you kill him (as it is) the verdict of Allah and His Apostle."

Yet these men and women embrace this religion. Only the extremely ignorant or the extremely intelligent would take such a decision.* Who knows, maybe their decision became easier because their will to please God outweighs their will to please the world!

Most of these converts/reverts* have in their Bible the statement ". . . refuse the evil and choose the good." [Isaiah 7:15], yet they chose Islam. Whether their choice was good, worthy, or sound depends on the considerable, unprejudiced in-depth research and study they did which is, arrogantly, neglected by others. Assuming that they employed reason and open-mindedness in their research then they would probably choose good just as Thomas Jefferson said "reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error". Did they find the truth after they pursued it or they settled for the religion they absorbed together with their mother's milk? It is very true that truth will set you free but this truth must be sought after, sometimes beyond our religious and ethnic boundaries. That is the hardest part as depicted by Galileo that, "All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them". It can be argued that these converts to Islam could have found God because they heeded the Biblical advice, "And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart." [Jeremiah 29:13], I mean the last part, "when you search for Me with all your heart", that is to say seeking for the true religion with seriousness and unrelenting hardwork minus subjectivity. . . . Something like reading Qur'an cover to cover, reading books written by respected Muslim scholars . . . . Unfortunately the demand for truth is lower than its supply. One wonders, how shall we be set free? Those who decide to happily refuse or neglect to investigate the reality of Islam should at least think over the words of Joanne Kathleen Rowling, English writer and author of Harry Potter, "Indifference and neglect often do more damage than outright dislike." Maybe these converts to Islam had the kind of freedom outlined by C. Wright Mills when he said, "Freedom is not merely the opportunity to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, *to argue over them* -- and then, the opportunity to choose."

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*There are so many misunderstandings/misconceptions about Islam. However, those who are willing to know the truth are asked to at least read Dr. Zakir Naik's book, *Answers to Non-Muslim Common Questions About Islam*. Dr. Zakir Naik is a renowned international orator on Islam and Comparative Religion. He is also the founder and president of the Islamic Research Foundation (IRF). With the leverage of scripture (e.g. Qur'an, Bible e.t.c) as well as reason, logic and scientific facts, Dr. Naik succeeded in wiping out the misconceptions about Islam. In that book, you will find convincing answers to questions like: Why is a man allowed to have more than one wife in Islam? Why does Islam degrade women by keeping them behind the veil? Why are most of the Muslims fundamentalists and terrorists? Why is the consumption of alcohol prohibited in Islam? Why do Muslims abuse non-Muslims by calling them 'Kafirs'? e.t.c.
You can freely download the book from: <http://www.islambasics.com/view.php?authID=154>; Also see <http://www.ilovezakirnaik.com/misconceptions/index.htm>

* The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word "revert" as "to come or go back (as to a former condition, period, or subject)" whereas the verb "convert" is defined as: 1 a) "to bring over from one belief, view, or party to another"; 2 b) "to change from one form or function to another." Suppose, we never inherited the religions of our fathers, what would be the natural religion of man? It will definitely be the religion than coincide with logic and reason, a religion that mandates the follower to submit to the natural laws of God. Hence if you inherited Buddhism and decided to go back to your born-with religion, you would be reverting to your former religion. Convert means going from one inherited religion to another inherited religion. Islam means submission and a Muslim is a person who submits to the laws of God. Islamic sources teach that every human being is born a Muslim, therefore a non-Muslim entering Islam is regarded as a revert rather than a convert. Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam said "No babe is born but upon Fitra (as a Muslim). It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Polytheist." [Muslim, Bk. 33, No. 6426]. Ali Mazrui a world-renowned political scientist and scholar writes "…Obama's election marks the first time that the US has chosen the son of a Muslim for president. That is what Barack Obama Senior was, despite his alcoholism. This means Barack Obama was himself born a Muslim, though he was subsequently brought up as a Christian. This is the first time the US has elected as president someone who was a Muslim at birth." See Mazrui, Ali. "Obama has chance to mend US-Muslim relations." City Press 13 Dec. 2008. However, for clarity purpose and for religious co-existence, this book shall interchangeably use both convert and revert; conversion and reversion to mean the same thing.

When we say that people are increasingly embracing Islam, we are talking of Christian scholars, rich men, famous people, men of strength, great intellectuals, nuns, priests, ministers, rabbis, and religiously devout people not forgetting the disadvantaged members of the community.* Supporting these claims, an authoritative study of the conversions to Islam as reported by *The Sunday Times* on 22 February 2004 show that some of Britain's top landowners, celebrities and the offspring of senior establishment figures have embraced the Islamic Faith after being disillusioned with western values.[17] In short, people from all walks of life gravitate towards Islam without much effort or organized missionary activities.

To be fair, Muslims, and a significantly low number, abandon their faiths for Christianity or for other religions. Most of these converts from Islam or Muslim apostates as they are called, constitute born Muslims ignorant of their own religion, followers of deviant sects of Islam, Muslims enslaved by worldly priorities, uneducated Muslims, poverty stricken Muslims who have no option but to appease the evangelical aid worker, those ". . . whose hearts, ears, and eyes Allah has sealed up, and they take no heed." [Q 16:108], intellectually challenged Muslims, among other disadvantaged people. But in comparison, non-Muslims are unprecedentedly streaming to Islam than the few, hardly seen, converts from Islam to Christianity or to any other religion. Amazingly, you will never hear a pious practicing Sunni Muslim armed with Islamic knowledge abandon Islam for any other religion. With all its finances, sophisticated means and well-organized missionary activities, still Christianity cannot obtain converts from Islam the way Islam gets from Christianity. The same is mentioned in the words of Peter Kreeft, a Catholic apologist, professor of philosophy at Boston College and The King's College, author of over 45 books, widely demanded speaker at conferences and Advisory Board member of the Catholic Educator's Resource Center. Professor Peter Kreeft writes: "Islam has the world's lowest rate of being converted and one of the world's highest rates of converting."[18] Hilaire Belloc (1870- 1953) a Roman Catholic, French-born historian and one of the most prolific writers in England saw the difficulty of winning converts from Islam back in the 1938:

> Islam is apparently unconvertible. The missionary efforts made by great Catholic orders which have been occupied in trying to turn Mohammedans into Christians for nearly 400 years have everywhere wholly failed. We have in some places driven the Mohammedan master out and freed his Christian subjects from Mohammedan control, but we have had hardly any effect in converting individual Mohammedans* . . . . [19]

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* It is to be remembered that most of Muhammad's followers were the disadvantaged members of the community: The slaves, the poor, the down-trodden, among others. Hence, Heraclius' benchmark for the truth of a religion: "When I asked you whether the rich or the poor people followed him (Muhammad), you replied that it was the poor who followed him. In fact, such are the followers of the Messengers of God." [See Bukhari Vol.4, Book 52, Hadith Number 191.]

17. Hellen, Nicholas and Christopher Morgan. "Islamic Britain lures top people." The Sunday Times 22 Feb. 2004. Also see: Whittell, Giles. "Allah Came Knocking At My Heart." The Times 7 Jan. 2002.

18. Kreeft, Peter. "Comparing Christianity & Islam." National Catholic Register May1987.

19. Belloc, Hilaire. The Great Heresies. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938. p. 98.

* "Mohammedanism" is a misnomer. Islam in the only religion that is not named after a person or a tribe. Christianity was named after Jesus Christ, Buddhism after Gotama Buddha, Confucianism after the Chinese philosopher Confucius, and Marxism after Karl Marx. It is unlike Judaism which is named after the tribe of Judah and Hinduism after the Hindus. The word "Islam" means submission or surrender of one's will to the only true God worthy of worship and anyone who does so is termed a "Muslim." So those who addressed Islam as Mohammedanism or Muslim as Mohammedans simply made a mistake.

Figures must speak, even louder

Maybe figures would speak louder than statements.

As quoted in the *World Christian Encyclopedia: A comparative study of churches and religions in the modern world:*

> ". . . Christianity has experienced *massive losses* in the Western and Communist worlds over the last 60 years. In the Sovient Union, Christians have fallen from 83.6% in 1900 to 36.1% today. In Europe and North America, nett defections from Christianity—converts to other religions or to irreligion — are now running at 1, 820, 500 former Christians a year. *This loss is much higher* . . . ."[20]

According to a Christian magazine, *The Plain Truth,*[21] with its source books being the *World Almanac* and *Book of Facts 1935*, *Reader's Digest Almanac* and *Yearbook 1983*, it acknowledged that in a span of fifty years (1934 – 1984):

From the figures given in that magazine, if we pick only three religions, it would appear as follows:

	No of adherents in 1934	No. of adherents in 1984	Percentage growth
Islam	209 020 000	700 000 000	235% Increase
Christianity	682 400 000	1 000 000 000	47% Increase
Judaism	15 630 000	15 000 000	4% Decrease

Shedding light on the unparalleled Muslim revival, the article which appeared in *The Plane Truth* in 1984 stated that, "In contrast to *declining* church memberships in the West, news reports would have told you of an opposite trend in the Moslem world. Islam would become the world's fastest-growing religion . . ."[22] and truly as predicted, Islam is now the fastest-growing religion.

20. Barrett, David B. World Christian Encyclopedia: A comparative study of churches and religions in the modern world, AD 1900-2000. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.p. 7.

21. Stump, Keith. W. "A Crucial Half Century of Religion." The Plain Truth Feb. 1984 p.11.

22. Stump, Keith. W. "A Crucial Half Century of Religion." The Plain Truth Feb. 1984 p.20.

As a matter of fact, the Vatican admits that Islam has overtaken Catholicism, "For the first time in history, we are no longer at the top: Muslims have overtaken us," Monsignor Vittorio Formenti said in an interview with the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*. Formenti who compiles the Vatican's yearbook said that Catholics accounted for 17.4 percent of the world population - a stable percentage - while Muslims were at 19.2 percent.[23]

Moreover, *The World Christian Database* (WCD) and its print predecessor the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (WCE) has reviewed religious populations around the world and released results of their investigations at various times. Refining from the tabulation of their results, to compare and contrast Islam and Christianity, the yearly growth rate percentage would be as follows:

Yearly Growth Rate Percentage over these periods			
	{1970-1985}	{1990-2000}	{2000-2005}
Islam	**2.74%**	**2.13%**	**1.84%**
Christianity	**1.64%**	**1.36%**	**1.38%**

[References for the figures provided see: Barrett, David B., George Thomas Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson. 2001. World Christian Encyclopedia: A comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. New York: Oxford University Press. p 4. Also see "The List: The World's Fastest-Growing Religions." Foreign Policy 14 May 2007.]

Talking about other non-Christian religions, the author of WCE's stand is: ". . . we may believe those religions false or inadequate and may attempt to win them to faith in Jesus Christ . . . ."[24] Hoping that the data on these 'deviant' religions provided therein are objective and not manipulated in an attempt to win them to faith in Jesus Christ, we shall use it for our analysis. The *World Christian Encyclopedia* gives the number of both Muslims and Christians in 1900 and in 2000. The population of Christians in 1900 and 2000 were 558 056 332 and 2 019 921 366 respectively and that of Muslims in the same years were 200 102 284 and1 200 653 040 respectively.[25]

A simple formula for calculating a percentage Growth Rate (or Percent Change) between two different periods is given as follows:

$$PR = \frac{V\ Present - V\ Past}{V\ Past} \times 100$$

23. Richard Owen. "Islam overtakes Catholicism as world's largest religion." Times 31 March 2008; also see Kington, Tom. "Number of Muslims ahead of Catholics, says Vatican." The Guardian 31 March 2008; "Muslims outnumber Catholics." PRESS TV. 30 Mar 2008 < http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=49503&sectionid=3510212> ; Rizzo, Alessandra (Associated Press Writer). "Muslims More Numerous Than Catholics." ABC News 30 March 2008; CBS News 30 March 2008.

24. Barrett, David B. Preface. World Christian Encyclopedia: A comparative study of churches and religions in the modern world, AD 1900-2000. By Barrett. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

25. Barrett, David B. World Christian Encyclopedia: A comparative study of churches and religions in the modern world, AD 1900-2000. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.p. 6.

Using the figures provided by the WCE, let's calculate the Percentage Growth of Christianity between 1900 and 2000.

$$PR = \frac{2\,019\,921\,366 - 558\,056\,332}{2\,019\,921\,366} \times 100$$

After calculating, the percentage growth of Christianity become **72%**

Using the figures provided by the WCE, let's now calculate the Percentage Growth of Islam between 1900 and 2000.

$$PR = \frac{1\,200\,653\,040 - 200\,102\,284}{1\,200\,653\,040} \times 100$$

After calculating, the percentage growth of Islam become **82%**

Still, Islam is leading with 82% Growth Rate whereas Christianity has 72% Growth rate. In 1997, statisticians at the *US Center for World Mission* stated that Christianity's total number of adherents is growing at about 2.3% annually.[26] According to *Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance* Islam is growing at about 2.9% per year which is faster than the total world population which is increasing at about 2.3% annually.[27] Extrapolating from the past Islam's growth trends, no difficulty should be encountered, then, in accepting that Islam will unquestionably surpass all religions of the world. On October 2009, Kenyan newspaper *The Standard* emerged with an article entitled: "one in every four is a Muslim as followers hits 1.57 billion worldwide."[28] This figure was revealed by Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life in a report which is billed as the most comprehensive of its kind. If in 2000, according to the *The World Christian Database* (WCD), the Muslims were 1.2 billion worldwide and 9 years later (i.e. 2009) *Pew Forum* concluded that Muslims had reached 1.57 billion worldwide, what will be the world Muslim population in the next 50 years? Time will tell.

Islam is growing by conversions

It is imperative to point out that the growth of Islam is not only attributed to high birth rates but due to conversions as well. A case in point is that in America alone, according to *St. Petersburg Times*, "Every year, about 20,000 people in the United States convert to Islam, in addition to those who convert in prison . . . of these converts, there are more women than men, the majority of them

26. Greg H. Parsons, Executive Director, U.S. Center for World Mission, Pasadena, CA; quoted in Zondervan News Service, 21 Feb. 1997.

27. Robinson, B.A. "Growth Rate of Christianity & Islam." religioustolerance.org. 6 Nov. 2001. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/growth_isl_chr.htm>; Also see Khan, Arshad. Islam, Muslims and America: Understanding the Basis of Their Conflict. Algora Publishing, 2003.p.29.

28. Gorski, Eric (AP Religion Writer). "One in every four is a Muslim as followers hits 1.57 billion worldwide." The Standard 9 Oct. 2009. Also see Greene, Richard Allen. "Nearly 1 in 4 people worldwide is Muslim, report says."CNN 8 Oct. 2009; <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/10/07/muslim.world.population/index.html>; Beaumont, Peter. "One in four people is Muslim, says study." Guardian 8 Oct. 2009; Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. "Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population." 8 Oct. 2009.

young and unmarried . . .”[29] The *NBC News* has also reported the same yearly figure of converts. According to *New York Times*, “An estimated 25 percent of American Muslims are converts.”[30] And this is bloodcurdling figure.

Let’s take Europe, for instance, as a case study. We will witness sources asserting that Islam will become a dominant religion in Europe. According to *The Washington Quarterly:*

> . . . Muslims will comprise at least 20 percent of Europe’s population by 2050. Some even predict that one-fourth of France’s population could be Muslim by 2025 and that, if trends continue, Muslims could outnumber non-Muslims in France and perhaps in all of western Europe by mid-century.[31]

Patrick Buchanan is an American political commentator, author, syndicated columnist, politician and broadcaster. He had also served as a senior advisor to President Richard Nixon, President Gerald Ford, and President Ronald Reagan. In a speech delivered on 7 December 2001, Buchanan said: “Don’t count Islam out. It is the fastest growing faith in Europe and has surpassed Catholicism worldwide. And as Christianity expires in the West and the churches empty out, the mosques are going up.”[32] A 1999 United Nations’ survey showed that between 1989 and 1998, Europe’s Muslim population grew by more than 100 percent.[33] Currently, Muslims comprise of about 10 % of Europe’s population while others predict that Muslims will make up 10% of Europe’s population by 2025.[34] Funny enough, Amsterdam and Rotterdam are expected to be the first large majority-Muslim cities in about 2015.[35] In an article entitled “In Europe, skylines reflect the rise of Islam” which appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Isabelle de Pommereau states: “Across Europe, the Continent’s fastest-growing religion (i.e. Islam) is establishing its public presence after decades in basements and courtyards, changing not only the architectural look of cities, but also their social fabrics.”[36] Discussing the major trends reshaping the global context, William Van Wishard illustrates that “the Catholic Church is facing the distinct possibility that in coming years, Islam will be the largest European faith.”[37] There are three major factors that are and will be making Europe become a Muslim majority continent: 1) Immigration; 2) Muslim High birth rate; and 3) conversions to Islam.

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29. Wiener, Jocelyn (Times Staff Writer). “Young, Female and Muslim.” St. Petersburg Times 7 Oct. 2002.

30. Elliott, Andrea. “Muslim Converts Face Discrimination.” New York Times 30 April 2005.

31. Savage, Timothy M. “Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing.” The Washington Quarterly Summer 2004. p. 28.

32. Buchanan, Patrick J. “Coming Clash of Civilizations? theamericancause.org. 7 Dec. 2001. <http://www.theamerican-cause.org/patcomingclashprint.htm.>

33. Allen Jr., John L. “Europe’s Muslims Worry Bishops.” National Catholic Reporter 22 Oct. 1999.

34. “The Integration Of Muslims In Europe.” Oxford Analytica 24 Feb. 2009. <http://www.forbes.com/2009/02/23/france-uk-muslims-business_oxford.htmllast> retrieved 29 April 2009.

35. Pipes, Daniel. “Europe or Eurabia?” Australian 15 April 2008.

36. Isabelle de Pommereau. “In Europe, skylines reflect the rise of Islam.” The Christian Science Monitor 26 July 2007.

37. Van Wishard, William. “Major Trends Reshaping the Global Context.” worldtrendsresearch.com <http://www.worldtrendsresearch.com/major-trends.php> Retrieved 12/09/2009.

We are interested with the third factor because it is conversions to Islam that will hasten Bernard Lewis'* famous prediction that Europe will be Islamic by century's end.[38] In 2005, *The Christian Science Monitor* stated: "Although there are no precise figures, observers who monitor Europe's Muslim population estimate that several thousand men and women convert each year."[39] The Muslims already in Europe will also convert the non-Muslim Europeans to Islam. Either the Muslims will directly engage in proselytizing efforts to win European souls or the Europeans will just convert due to "I converted to Islam because I was impressed by the behaviors of Muslims" argument or the European will convert to Islam to marry a Muslim. Perhaps, this (conversion) factor was inclusive in the Gadhafi speech: "We have 50 million Muslims in Europe. There are signs that Allah will grant Islam victory in Europe – without swords, without guns, without conquests. The 50 million Muslims of Europe will turn it into a Muslim continent within a few decades."[40]

In Europe, Islam is the second largest religion.[41] From life experiences, even from school performances, we know that a student who used to get D grade can move to C grade then B grade. With continual hard work and determination, the student can attain grade A. Hence, it won't be mysterious for Islam to surpass Christianity (and all other religions) in Europe. If Islam is currently the second largest religion in Europe, chances are that it is going to be the largest religion in Europe. In an interview, Ingmar Karlsson, Sweden's consul general in İstanbul, who is a Doctor of Divinity honoris causa at Lund University and a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Växjö and the author of more than 10 books, has acknowledged Islam as a "domestic" European religion. He said in an interview: "When I grew up in Sweden after World War II, there were three Muslims in the country, three! . . . Now, Muslims make up 5 to 6 percent of Sweden's population. And as this number continues to rise, everyone will realize that Islam is and will be a European religion."[42] The Sweden's consul general was distressed by those who don't understand the dynamics of Islam in Europe, "People are ignorant about the religion of Islam. People don't understand that Islam today is a European religion . . ."[43] He said in the interview.

According to *Chicago Tribune* foreign correspondent Evan Osnos: "For Europe . . . the question is not which civilization, Western or Islamic, will prevail, but which of Islam's many strands will dominate."[44] Some might anticipate the following as the product of a Muslim-majority Europe: Europe will have more of mosques and minarets than churches and cathedrals; *Adhan*, call to prayer

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* Bernard Lewis is a British-American historian, Orientalist, and political commentator. He is the Cleveland E. Dodge Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University and the recipient of AEI's Irving Kristol Award for 2007. He made his prediction in 2004 that Europe would be Islamic by the end of the century. See Hundley, Tom. "Article of Faith for Some: Europe Going Muslim." Chicago Tribune 25 June 2006.

38. Lewis, Bernard. "Europe and Islam." American Enterprise Institute. 7 March 2007 (AEI Annual Dinner, Irving Kristol Lecture :Washington). Also see Machlis, David and Tovah Lazaroff. "Muslims about to take over Europe." The Jerusalem Post 29 Jan. 2007.

39. Ford, Peter. "Why European Women Are Turning to Islam." The Christian Science Monitor 27 Dec. 2005.

40. Edwards, Ruth Dudley. "Will Britain one day be Muslim?" The Daily Mail 5 May 2007. Also see: Al Jazeera television. 10 April 2006.

41. Esposito, John L. "Introduction John L. Esposito."In The Oxford History of Islam. Ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online. 11 March 2009. Also see: "Observing Islam." Online newshour. pbs.org. 16 Nov. 2001.<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/religion/july-dec01/islam_11-16.html>

42. "Islam is and will be a European religion." Today's Zaman 12 March 2007.

43. "Islam is and will be a European religion." Today's Zaman 12 March 2007.

44. Osnos, Evan. "Islam shaping a new Europe." Chicago Tribune 19 Dec. 2004.

will echo from Paris to Rotterdam to Brussels and London; bearded men and hijab-wearing women flooding the streets; Muslim head's of state throughout the Europeans governments; Christians lobbying for minority rights; freedom of expression compromised; Sharia law implemented . . . .

A billion Flies can't be wrong!

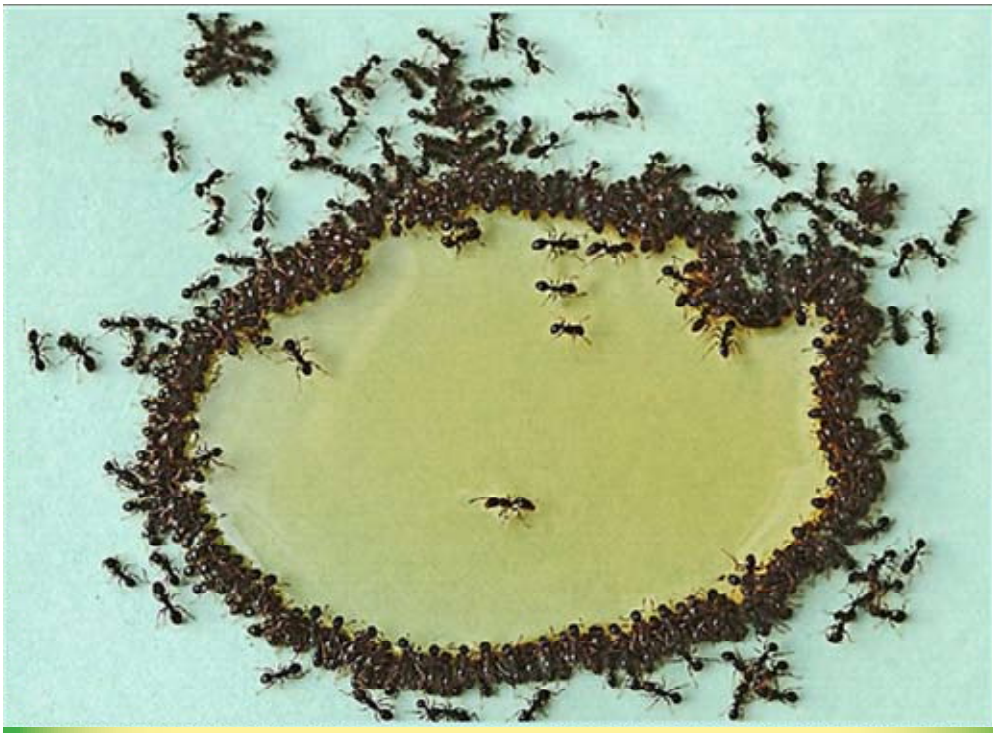
The fact that unprecedented numbers of non-Muslims are streaming into Islam *is not necessarily* a guarantee that Islam is the true religion. Are we supposed to take feces as a fancy dish because a billion flies can't be wrong? Or should we trust the cigarette addict who says in an unremitting conviction: "Smoking is a healthy pastime, since millions of people do it, why should we think otherwise?" One might flippantly contend that the greatest number of people in the world follows Christianity, so it must be true. But as the facts show, Islam *will* soon have the greatest number of followers; will it mean that Islam is the true religion?

No matter how many people happen to subscribe to a religion, what is important is to examine whether or not there was a truth that appealed to the majority. Numbers are essential and there is indeed safety in numbers especially when such great numbers are subscribing to truth and not the "every-one-is-doing-it-just-do-it" fallacy. However, most, if not all, of these converts to Islam did an *unbiased in-depth research* on Islam before accepting it. This phenomenal growth of Islam, especially by conversions, begs our attention and demand any God-conscious person to re-examine Islam without subjectivity.*

* Brilliant books that have objectively examined the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) for their truths are the two books: God'ed and MisGod'ed by Dr. Laurence B. Brown. They can be ordered from www.amazon.com.

Part 1.2

Smart People, Smart Decisions



"Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider its ways, and be wise." [Proverbs 6:6] Ants attracted by honey, in droves they rushed to it. In Qur'an, there is a whole chapter containing 93 verses that is called "The Ants." It is Chapter 27 of the Holy Qur'an.

"A wise man makes his own decisions, an ignorant man follows the public opinion."

~ Chinese Proverb

Some Smart People Who Made Smart Decisions

To give a glimpse on the fact that people from all walks of life are streaming to Islam, we shall highlight *some* of the individuals who discarded their beliefs for Islam after undergoing a period of solemn introspection and research on spiritual credibility. The following are among those who made the decision of embracing Islam. These are but a tip of the iceberg. It has been observed that reverting to Islam is, in fact, a popular and fashionable thing to do. These men and women entered into Islam by simply proclaiming the two testimonies: "There is none to be worshipped except Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger"

They include:

Murad Wilfried Hofmann

"Under normal circumstances, no one survives an accident like that. God has something special in mind for you, my friend!"

~ Surgeon remarks to Wilfried Hofmann while undergoing surgery on his chin and lower hip. That was 1951, when he was involved in a serious accident in which he lost nineteen teeth and was left with a disfigured mouth.

Murad Wilfried Hofmann was born into a Catholic family on 6 July 1931 in Aschaffenburg, Germany. He graduated from Union College in New York (pre-law; sociology, 1950-51) and completed his legal studies in Munich University where he received a doctorate in jurisprudence in 1957. Following an Assistant Professorship in Civil Procedure, he Studied American Law at Harvard Law School where he received an LL.M. Degree (1960). He became the Director of Information for NATO in Brussels from 1983 to 1987. From 1961 until 1994, he was a member of the German foreign service and a specialist on issues of nuclear defense. He was appointed as a German Ambassador to Algeria (1987-90), and a German Ambassador to Morocco (1990-94).

While working as an Attaché in the German Consulate General in Algiers, Murad got the chance of witnessing the bloody guerilla conflict between France and the Algerian National Front.

A lengthy process, rich in remarkable and thought-provoking events, including compelling encounters with Islamic philosophy led Hoffman to embrace Islam in 1980. To learn more about his life and conversion process, please read his 240 page book *Journey to Islam, Diary of a German Diplomat (1951-2000).* Also refer to his book *Journey to Makkah* [paperback: 192 pages] in which he recorded his faith journey to Islam.

". . . In place of the qualified deism of a tribal God and the constructions of a divine Trinity, the Qur'an showed me the most lucid, most straightforward, the most abstract – thus historically most advanced - and least anthropomorphic concept of God."

To give a glimpse, Murad analyzed works of philosophers, such as Wittgenstein, Pascal, Swinburn, and Kant, he then came to the intellectual conviction that God must exist. Murad went into the quest of knowing how God communicates to human beings so that they can be guided, hence making the conclusions for the need for revelations. He ventured into examining Judeo-Christian scriptures and Islamic scriptures.

Furthermore, his experiences in the Arab World played a great role in his spiritual journey. He says, "I witnessed the patience and resilience of the Algerian people in the face of extreme suffering, their overwhelming discipline during Ramadan, their confidence of victory, as well as their humanity amidst misery." He felt it was their religion that made them so, and therefore, he started studying their religious book – the Qur'an. "I have never stopped reading it, to this very day." It is of no doubt that the Qur'an had a larger impact to his coming to Islam. This is evidenced in *Religion on the Rise* where he wrote:

> Western people often make fun of anything even remotely smacking of "miracles." We know now that the road to Christianity is paved with miracles aplenty. The road to Islam, on the other hand, leads through a single miracle, the Qur'anic revelation, an event that each reader may experience anew when sincerely exposing himself to that astonishing text. Prospective Muslims will find in the Qur'an the challenge to reflect by themselves rather than have others do the thinking for them. Above all, the Qur'an cautions against automatically and unquestionably assuming one's parents' convictions. As Wolfgang von Goethe would phrase it, Muslims, in order really to profess their faith, should seek intellectually to acquire what they inherited from their parents. This sober Islamic rationality, reflected as well in the bright and clear atmosphere of mosques, impresses many Occidental people mightily.

One of his intellectual assets is that Murad had thorough knowledge of Christian history

and doctrines. He realized that there was a significant difference between what a faithful Christian believes and what a professor of history teaches at the university. He was particularly troubled by the Church's adoption of the doctrines established by St. Paul in preference to that of historical Jesus. "He, who never met Jesus, with his extreme Christology replaced the original and correct Judeo-Christian view of Jesus!"

To give a glimpse on his transformation process, Dr. Murad Hofmann admits:

> I began to see Islam with its own eyes, as the unadulterated, pristine belief in the one and only, the true God, Who does not beget, and was not begotten, Whom nothing and nobody resembles. In place of the qualified deism of a tribal God and the constructions of a divine Trinity, the Qur'an showed me the most lucid, most straightforward, the most abstract – thus historically most advanced - and least anthropomorphic concept of God. The Qur'an's ontological statements, as well as its ethical teachings, impressed me as profoundly plausible, "as good as gold," so there was no room for even the slightest doubt about the authenticity of Muhammad's prophetic mission. People who understand human nature cannot fail to appreciate the infinite wisdom of the "Dos and Don'ts" handed down from God to man in the form of the Qur'an.

When he reverted to Islam, he made the following statement:

> For some time now, striving for more and more precision and brevity, I have tried to put on paper in a systematic way, all philosophical truths, which, in my view, can be ascertained beyond reasonable doubt. In the course of this effort it dawned upon me that the typical attitude of an agnostic is not an intelligent one; that man simply cannot escape a decision to believe; that the createdness of what exists around us is obvious; that Islaam undoubtedly finds itself in the greatest harmony with overall reality. Thus I realize, not without shock, that step by step, in spite of myself and almost unconsciously, in feeling and thinking I have grown into a Muslim. Only one last step remained to be taken: to formalize my conversion. As of today I am a Muslim. I have arrived.

After he converted to Islam, he knew why God wanted him to survive the accident in 1951. The accident that makes people shocked, and maybe disappointed, if you don't die. "Finally, thirty years later, on the very day I professed my faith in Islam, the true meaning of my survival became clear to me!" He said.

Murad as a guest speaker to The Oxford-Princeton International Conference "*Muslims in Europe post 9/11"*, geared towards assessing the impact of the 2001 Terror attacks on the Muslim communities in Europe.

Once very artistic about red wine, he would now politely refuse offers of alcohol. When he participated in luncheons during Ramadhan there would be always an empty plate in front of him. Hoffman performed Hajj (Pilgrimage) in 1992 and he has performed *Umrah* (lesser hajj) not less than seven times. In 1995, Murad voluntarily resigned from the Foreign Service to dedicate himself to Islamic causes.

Murad Hoffman has been a member of the Board of Directors of the *Ibn Rushd Islamic University of Andalucia*, Cordoba, Spain; a corresponding member of the *Academy of Islamic Civilization Research*, Amman, Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan; an honorary member and advisor to the

Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD). Hoffman is also one of the signatories of *A Common Word Between Us and You*, an open letter by Islamic scholars to Christian leaders, calling for peace and understanding. The letter calls for peace between Muslims and Christians and tries to work for common ground and understanding among both faiths based especially on the two main commandments: {1} Love God; and {2} Love one's fellow man (neighbor). The books he authored include *Journey to Makkah.* [1998, Paperback: 192 pages]; *Islam 2000* [3rd ed. 2001, Paperback: 72 pages]; *Religion on the Rise: Islam in the 3rd Millennium* [2001, Paperback: 248pages] *Journey to Islam, Diary of a German Diplomat (1951-2000*), [Paperback: 240 pages]; *Islam: The Alternative.* [2nd ed. 1997, Paperback: 168 pages]. Apart from having written ten books on Islam, Murad also writes articles for *Islamic Studies* in Islamabad, for the *American Journal for Islamic Social Studies* in Washington, for *Encounters* in England and he writes for an Islamic newspaper in Germany. In 1996, he visited the Pentagon where he met the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) to discuss the mission of future Muslim Chaplains in the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines. The Commendations (award or citation given to somebody in recognition of an outstanding achievement) he has received include Federal Cross of Merit, Germany (awarded by the then German President Dr. Carl Carstens in 1984); Commander of the Order of Merit, Italy; Order of Merit in the Arts and Sciences, 1st Class, Egypt; and Grand Cordon.

Murad Wilfried Hofmann in Berlin

Mr. Hoffman has a son from his late (American) first wife. Upon retirement, he took up residence in Istanbul, home of his Turkish wife. Murad Hoffman travels widely in Europe and North America. His son is also a diplomat.

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Yvonne Ridley

"Every morning I woke up, I thought 'is this going to be my last day?"

~ Yvonne Ridley ~

Near the city of Jalalabad. The year was 2001 when the Islamic regime of the Taliban was in full control. Even cameras were banned under the regime. The Taliban had declared a holy war against the infidels. A British journalist disguised in burka riding on a donkey was ready to undertake an undercover assignment in the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. She entered the country illegally without a passport and visa. Was she an American spy? No one could tell until the unexpected happened. A camera which she hid in the folds of her burka slipped out right in the full view of a passing Taliban soldier! She spent six days in the intelligence headquarters in Jalalabad before being taken to Kabul prison where the bed was inside a dirty, claustrophobic prison cell with no running water; her mind thinking of electrodes and torture instruments; thinking of being flogged or stoned to death.

Maybe she thought she was outsmarting the Taliban! Yvonne tried to secure her release by offering to read the Qur'an . . . Back in England, her husband broke down in tears when he was told of her arrest. ". . . The Taliban is a fanatical regime and I am concerned that they will think she has been gathering intelligence." He said.

Yvonne Ridley was born in 1968 in Stanley, County Durham, England. She was brought up a Protestant, in the Church of England. She used to sing in the church choir and was the Sunday school teacher in her village in the north of England. She became a senior reporter of the Sunday Express at the time, having spent nearly 10 years in Fleet Street working for several prestige titles including *The Sunday Times*, *The Observer*, *Daily Mirror* and *Independent*. The award-winning

journalist Yvonne Ridley has also worked on projects as a broadcaster, producer and presenter on programmes for BBC TV and radio, CNN, ITN and Carlton TV travelling to Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine.

Back in the hands of the Taliban, Yvonne Ridley had started becoming horrible. "I was horrible to my captors. I spat at them and was rude and refused to eat. It wasn't until I was freed that I became interested in Islam." She said. One of her captors asked her to convert; she refused, but promised to read the Qur'an after her release. "I made a promise to a Taliban cleric that I would study Islam - if I was released. He had just asked me if I wanted to convert and I was terrified to say 'yes' or 'no' because either response could have drawn accusations that I was fickle or insulting and therefore be stoned." Several days later Yvonne was released unharmed on humanitarian grounds on the orders of Mullah Omar, the Taliban's one-eyed spiritual leader.

Regarding her previous knowledge about Islam, Ridley said she knew "[n]othing more factual than would fill the back of a postage stamp. Of course I'd subscribed to all the myths about women being subjugated and how it was an evil and violent religion full of fanatics."But, after reading the Qur'an, a *"magna carta for women" as* per her description, Yvonne converted to Islam in the summer of 2003, two-and-a-half years after her capture. She stopped drinking a year before the conversion. In fact she is proud to mention that the first revert to Islam was a woman (i.e. Muhammad's first wife, Khadija), and the first martyr is a woman (i.e. Summayya). Yvonne Ridley likes wearing Hijab. "It tells the world I'm a Muslim: Don't hit on me; don't chat me up; don't offer me alcohol or a bacon sandwich; if you're going to talk to me, let's talk about something serious. I can't remember the last time anyone told me a dirty joke. That's quite nice . . ." She said.

"I was horrible to my captors. I spat at them and was rude and refused to eat. It wasn't until I was freed that I became interested in Islam."

Marveling at the authenticity of the Qur'an, she said, "I was absolutely blown away by what I was reading - not one dot or squiggle had been changed in 1,400 years." Comparing women's rights in the Qur'an and in western society, Ridley said, "The first thing I scrutinized when I read the Qur'an was property and divorce laws. I was amazed. I thought it could have been written by a Hollywood divorce lawyer. In fact, that's probably from where they got their inspiration." Fulfilling the promise to study Islam, the coursework required her to turn to several eminent Islamic academics for further research on Islam. She approached Dr Zaki Badawi, for advice and instruction; she was even given several books by the famed Sheikh Abu Hamza Al-Masri who she spoke to after sharing a platform at an Oxford Union debate.

She has also listened to and spoken with Dr Muhammad Al-Massari, to mention a few Muslim academics. Her study of the Qur'an led her to give this comment:

> The Qur'an could have been written yesterday for today. It could sit very easily with any Green Party manifesto, it is environmentally friendly and it is a true inspiration for the 21st century, yet not one word has changed since the day it was written – unlike other religious tomes bent on courting popularity.

Her conversion was convoyed with trials and difficult moments just because she became an observant Muslim wearing Hijab. There was even a cabbie who said, "Don't leave a bomb in the back seat" and asked, "Where's bin Laden hiding?"

Yvonne has written a book entitled *In The Hands of the Taliban* published by Robson Books in the U.K. The other book she authored is *Ticket to Paradise*. Soon after accepting Islam, Ridley performed Hajj. Talking about her Hajj experiences, she says:

> . . . Hajj itself was a very moving experience simply because of the huge number of Muslims involved. It is incredible. Anyone who hasn't been on Hajj should do so. It makes you aware of your roots as a Muslim. The experience was absolutely unforgettable and deeply moving for me. One day I was running late for prayer and was going down the winding streets toward the Haram (The Grand Mosque of Makah). There were tens of thousands of pilgrims in the streets. It was totally chaotic — everybody was pushing and jostling and bumping in order to get to the Haram on time. Suddenly there was the call to prayer and everybody stopped and out of the chaos, people snapped into little lines straightaway. I thought there wasn't a single army in the world that could have stood to attention so quickly. And I just thought of Allah's army and that I am part of it. My eyes fill with tears when I think of what I witnessed. It made me very proud to belong to this huge family. There we all were, many different languages, nationalities and skin colors. One prayer call and we all understood and we were all united. Out of the chaos, a beautiful uniformity. It also made me very sad, because I thought if we could be as strong as that in only a few seconds, then why can't we do the same after prayers as well.

Yvonne is a founder member of *Women in Journalism*, a promoter of women's rights, and is also a founder member of the *Stop The War Coalition* and the *RESPECT* political party. She is a member of *The National Union of Journalists*, *The International Federation of Journalists* and *The Society of Authors*. She now works as a political presenter and journalist for the global, English language, 24-hour news station *Press TV*. She also writes for the New York-based publication *Daily Muslims*. In her own words regarding her reversion to Islam, she proudly admits "I have joined what I consider to be the biggest and best family in the world. When we stick together we are absolutely invincible." Some of her lectures (downloadable from the internet) include *'Conversion to Islam'* and *'Journey to Islam'*.

Lamenting against the increasing attacks on Islamic principles, she writes:

> . . . Now, it is with disgust and dismay that I watch here in Britain as former foreign secretary Jack Straw describes the Muslim nikab -- a face veil that reveals only the eyes -- as an unwelcome barrier to integration, with Prime Minister Tony Blair, writer Salman Rushdie and even Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi leaping to his defense. Having been on both sides of the veil, I can tell you that most Western male politicians and journalists who lament the oppression of women in the Islamic world have no idea what they are talking about. They go on about veils, child brides, female circumcision, honor killings and forced marriages, and they wrongly blame Islam for all this -- their arrogance surpassed only by their ignorance. These cultural issues and customs have nothing to do with Islam. A careful reading of the Koran shows that just about everything that Western feminists fought for in the 1970s was available to Muslim women 1,400 years ago. Women in Islam are considered equal to men in spirituality, education and worth, and a woman's gift for childbirth and child-rearing is regarded as a positive attribute. When Islam offers women so much, why are Western men so obsessed with Muslim women's attire? Even British government ministers Gordon Brown and John Reid have made disparaging remarks about the nikab -- and they hail from across the Scottish border, where men wear skirts..... What is more liberating: being judged on the length of your skirt and the size of your surgically enhanced breasts, or being judged on your character and intelligence? In Islam, superiority is achieved through piety -- not beauty, wealth, power, position or sex. I didn't know whether to scream or laugh when Italy's Prodi joined the debate last week by declaring that it is "common sense" not to wear the nikab because it makes social relations "more difficult." Nonsense. If this is the case, then why are cellphones, landlines, e-mail, text messaging and fax machines in daily use? And no one switches off the radio because they can't see the presenter's face.

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Jeffrey Lang

God will bring you to your knees, Jeffrey!"

~ Said his father in response to Jeffrey denying the existence of God at the age of eighteen.

Dr. Jeffrey Lang (born January 30, 1954 in Bridgeport, Connecticut) is an Associate Professor of Mathematics at the University of Kansas, one of the biggest universities in the United States. Lang was born in a Roman Catholic family. Although he went to a Roman Catholic school, by the time Jeffrey was 16, he was an atheist. Throughout his undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies, Jeffrey Lang remained an atheist. However, he accepted Islam in the early 1980's. Jeffrey Lang received his Ph.D. from Purdue University in 1981. His thesis, on Zariski surfaces, was written under the direction of William Heinzer and Piotr Blass. His Dissertation was titled: *The Divisor Classes Of The Surface Zpn=G(X, Y) Over Fields Of Characteristic P>0.* Lang's research interest is Commutative Algebra.

An encounter with his student, a Muslim with Arab descent, eventually led him to Islam. Lang said that he had always been fascinated by mathematics claiming that "Maths is logical. It consists of using facts and figures to find concrete answers. That is the way my mind works, and it is frustrating when I deal with things that do not have concrete answers." Such an attitude made him not buy the idea of blind faith offered by most religions.

"Maths is logical. It consists of using facts and figures to find concrete answers. That is the way my mind works, and it is frustrating when I deal with things that do not have concrete answers."

The first encounters with the Qur'an, was to Lang, very fascinating which led him confess:

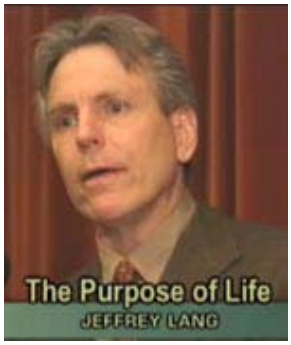
> Painters can make the eyes of a portrait appear to be following you from one place to another, but which author can write a scripture that anticipates your daily vicissitudes?. . . Each night I would formulate questions and objections and somehow discover the answer the next day. It seemed that the author (of the Quran) was reading my ideas and writing in the appropriate lines in time for my next reading. I have met myself in its pages . . . .

He also stated that:

> You cannot simply read it (Qur'an). You either have surrendered to it already or you fight it. It attacks tenaciously, directly, personally; it debates, criticizes, shames, and challenges. From the outset it draws the line of battle, and I was on the other side . . . . For those whom Islam has embraced, the greatest witness to God's unremitting, pursuing, sustaining, and guiding love is the Qur'an. Like a vast magnificent ocean, it lures you deeper and deeper into its dazzling waves until you are swept into it. But instead of drowning in a sea of darkness, as described above, you find yourself immersed in an ocean of divine light and mercy . . . as I read the Qur'an and prayed the Islamic prayers, a door to my heart was unsealed and I was immersed in an overwhelming tenderness. Love became more permanent and real than the earth beneath my feet; its power restored me and made it so that even I could feel love. I was happy enough to have found faith in a sensible religion. But I never expected to be touched by such intoxicating mercy.

He is the author of two best selling works: *"Struggling to Surrender"* and *"Even Angels Ask: A Journey to Islam in America."* His most recent book is entitled *"Losing My Religion: A Call For Help."* Apart from the many articles and books he has written, Lang has also been invited to give lectures. Some of the lectures he delivered include:

- ►The Purpose of Life (video)
- ►Winning Our Children Back To Islam (video)
- ►Men and Women's Relations in Islam. (live TV program)
- ►Qur'an and My Life. A Guidance and a Light
- ►Understanding Islam: The Qur'an
- ►Pillars of Islam: The Spiritual Dimensions
- ►Islam Between Faith and Reason



Lang married a Saudi Muslim woman named Rakia and has three children, Jameelah, Sarah, and Fattin.

You can watch Jeffrey Lang sharing his experience from atheism to Islam by logging to any of these links:

<http://www.youtubeislam.com/video/1857/DrJeffrey-Lang-at-the-DeenShow>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcNOaePZT68>

You can also purchase his video lecture *"The Purpose of Life"* from <*http://www.onlineislamicstore.com/a3851.html*>

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Khadijah 'Sue' Watson

"Muslims are the hardest people to convert to another faith"

~ Said Mary Sue Malvar, the ordained, licensed minister, and a Christian missionary.

Mary Sue Malvar is an American from California. She has a BA in theology and had graduated with Masters of Divinity in 1993. She was an ordained, licensed minister, a Christian missionary who spent seven years preaching in the Philippines. Mary, a professor of theology, shifted from being a Roman Catholic to a Born-Again, Spirit-Filled Christian. Having been in the evangelical missions, she really meant it when she said "Muslims are the hardest people to convert to another faith because there is nothing to offer them! In Islam, there is a relationship with Allah, forgiveness of sins, salvation and promise of Eternal Life."

Her contact with a revert to Islam prompted her to seriously investigate Islam and to conclude that "many Christians are sincere, but they are sincerely wrong." After making the decision to study about Islam from Muslim sources, in a span of a week, she had read 12 books and had spent more than 15 hours in religious discussion. "I knew cognitively (head knowledge)", she said after her analysis of the religion, "that Islam is true." On further readings and prayers for guidance Mary Sue Malvar decided to become a Muslim and changed her names to Khadijah Sue Watson. One of her daughters once commented that she was nicer as a Muslim than when she was a Christian! This surprised her because, as she puts it "as a Christian, I had always tried to exemplify what I believed."

". . . I knew cognitively (head knowledge) that Islam is true."

'Sue' Watson the Former pastor, missionary, and professor in Divinity went through a hard time after embracing Islam. This is what she says:

> I was fired from my job as I was teaching in two Bible Colleges at that time, ostracized by my former classmates, professors and co-pastors, disowned by my husband's family, misunderstood by my adult children and made a suspicion by my own government. Without the faith that enables man to stand up to Satanic forces I would not have been able to withstand all of this. I am ever so grateful to Allah that I am a Muslim and may I live and die a Muslim. ". . . Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds. No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first [among you] of the Muslims." [Q 6:162-163]

Khadijah Watson is presently working as a teacher at Al-Hamra Islamic Education Foundation in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. One of her nine children embraced Islam after secretly reading some Islamic books belonging to her.

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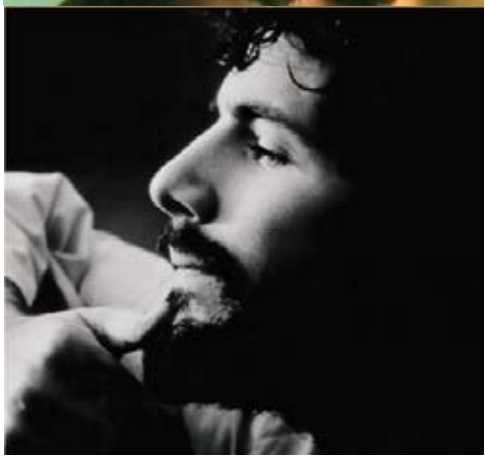
Cat Stevens

"Oh God! If you save me I will work for you."

~ Exclaimed Cat Stevens when his leisurely swim off the coast of Malibu turned into a nightmare. He was busy drowning.



21 of July 1948, Steven Demetre Georgiou who would later be known by his stage name Cat Stevens was born to a Greek Orthodox father and Swedish Baptist mother. "I was born to a Christian family which revered money and I did the same, I felt in admiration for singers to the extent that I made of them my supreme god , then decided to become one of them. I ended up becoming one of the biggest Pop stars, and media made of me an icon, bigger than life itself and will live forever." He said.

Cat Stevens is a singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, educator, and philanthropist. He had been a pop star since his teens. Under the name "Cat Stevens", he has sold over 60 million albums around the world since the late 1960s. The world famous British pop singer used to earn sometimes more than $ 150 000 a night. Cat Stevens had everything most people aspire to achieve: fame, talent, wealth, good looks, and strong magnetism towards the opposite sex, yet he felt something was seriously missing. Living a fast-moving pop-star life, Stevens for once, received a call to spiritual awakening. He became very ill with tuberculosis and a collapsed lung. Consequently, Cat Stevens got hospitalized for a long period, an experience that made him search for the meaning of life.

In 1976, Stevens received yet another call to spiritual awakening. This time, at the coast of Malibu, California, where he nearly drowned. He shouted in the bid to conform with the constant calls, "Oh God! If you save me I will work for you." This near-death experience intensified his long-held quest for spiritual truth. Cat Stevens had looked into other spiritual formulas including Buddhism, Zen, and I Ching, Numerology, Tarot cards and Astrology. He writes:

> My quest for truth continued in parallel with my artistic career, till the day when a friend of mine who came back from a trip in the East told me that he found serenity inside a mosque which he didn't in a church, which led me to shift my interest to that religion and bought a translated Koran. At last I found answers to my questions: Who I am? Where I come from? And what is my goal in Life? Through my several readings of this holy book, I concluded that there is only one God with whom we can communicate directly without any interference.

It was the Qur'an that gave him the peace he was searching as he says, ". . . I would like to stress that I did not come into contact with any Muslim before I embraced Islam. I read the Qur'an first and realized that no person is perfect. Islam is perfect, and if we imitate the conduct of the Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) we will be successful."

He further states:

> Everything made so much sense. This is the beauty of the Qur'an; it asks you to reflect and reason....When I read the Qur'an further, it talked about prayer, kindness and charity. I was not a Muslim yet, but I felt the only answer for me was the Qur'an and God had sent it to me.

He formally reverted to the Islamic faith in 1977, and took the name Yusuf Islam in 1978. After reverting to Islam, Yusuf Islam denounced his pop career calling music un-Islamic, auctioning his guitars and gold records and used the proceeds for Islamic charities. He even urged record companies to stop stocking his music, some of which he viewed as "immoral". Talking about the need for dropping out of music, he said, ". . . I had another agenda to fulfill; I had to learn my faith and look after my family, and I had to make priorities."

Estimating in January 2007 that he continues to earn approximately $1.5 million USD a year from his Cat Stevens music, he decided to use his accumulated wealth and continuing earnings from his music career on philanthropic and educational causes in the Muslim community of London and elsewhere such as supporting orphans in Bosnia. In 1982, he and other concerned Muslims were troubled to see their children not getting proper Islamic education in Britain. Hence they founded the *Islamia Schools' Trust*, a registered British charity which led to the opening of a Muslim primary school in London the following year and secondary schools later.

Yusuf Islam was famed for publicly endorsing the death sentence issued by Ayatollah Khomeini against Salman Rushdie in February 1989. "Salman Rushdie, indeed any writer who abuses the Prophet or indeed any Prophet under Islamic law, the sentence for that is actually death," he said at the time, stating the punishment for blasphemers required under Islamic law. Showing that blasphemy is a capital offense according to God's standards, he said; "If you ask a Bible student to quote the legal punishment of a person who commits blasphemy in the Bible, he would be dishonest if he didn't mention Leviticus

". . . It will be wrong to judge Islam in the light of the behavior of some bad Muslims who are always shown on the media. It is like judging a car as a bad one if the driver of the car is drunk and he bangs it into the wall."

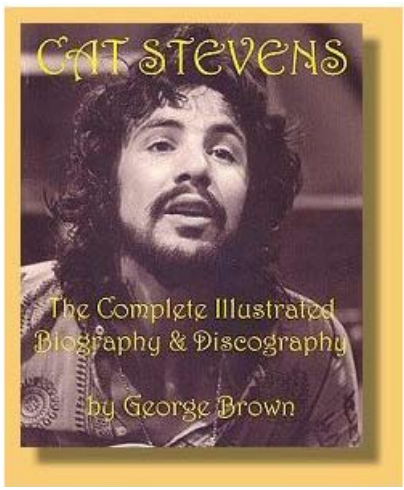
24:16." The verse reads: "And whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death."

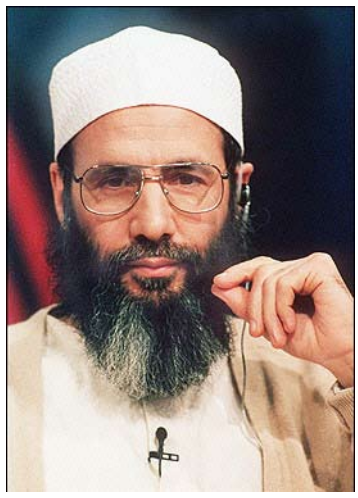
Yusuf Islam has been given several awards including 2004 *Man for Peace Award* presented by Mikhail Gorbachev for his dedication to promote peace, the reconciliation of people and to condemn terrorism; (2005), *Honorary Doctorate* by the University of Gloucestershire for services to education and humanitarian relief; (2007), *The Mediterranean Prize for Peace* in Naples, Italy; *Honorary Doctorate* (LLD) by the University of Exeter (10 July 2007), in recognition of his humanitarian work and improving understanding between Islamic and Western cultures.

Yusuf and Prince Charles who revealed that he was a fan of the 70s pop idol Cat Stevens. They met at the opening of Britain's first state-funded Muslim school.

He lives with his wife, Fauzia Mubarak Ali, and five children in Brondesbury Park, London and spends part of each year in Dubai. In response to those who take black-sheep's of Islam as the benchmark for its truth, Yusuf Islam said:

It will be wrong to judge Islam in the light of the behavior of some bad Muslims who are always shown on the media. It is like judging a car as a bad one if the driver of the car is drunk and he bangs it into the wall. Islam guides all human beings in the daily life - in its spiritual, mental and physical dimensions. But we must find the sources of these instructions, the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet. Then we can see the ideal of Islam.





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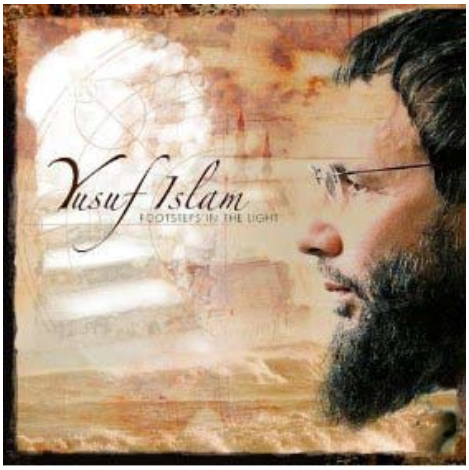

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Jemima Goldsmith

"my decision to convert to islam was entirely my own choice"

~ Jemima Marcelle Goldsmith

Jemima (birth name Jemima Marcelle Goldsmith) was born in London on January 30, 1974 to the British billionaire Sir James Goldsmith and Lady Annabel Vane Tempest Stewart. She attended Francis Holland School Clarence Gate and Bristol University. She also did an MA in Middle Eastern Studies at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London.

She was raised a Protestant Christian but converted to Islam and took the name Haiqa. The beautiful Jemima, a close friend of the late Princess Diana, married Imran Khan, an Oxford-educated Pakistani cricketer, in 1995. In the headline *Why I chose Islam*, which appeared on the Sunday Telegraph, May 28, 1995**,** Jemima writes:

> I studied in depth both the Qur'an and the works of various Islamic scholars . . . , thus giving me ample time to reflect before making my decision. What began as intellectual curiosity slowly

ripened into a dawning realization of the universal and eternal truth that is Islam.

And among the influences that made her convert include the writings of Muhammad Asad, Gai Eaton, and Alija Izetbegovic.

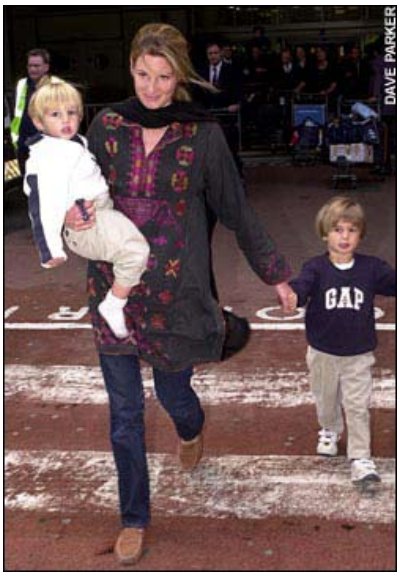
"I studied in depth both the Qur'an and the works of various Islamic scholars"

Jemima and her husband went to live in Lahore, Pakistan. In 1997, Suleiman their first son was born and without much delay, Qasim their second child was born two years later.

As a victim of media misrepresentation, Jemima found it necessary to respond in the following words:

> Contrary to current opinion, my decision to convert to Islam was entirely my own choice and in no way hurried . . . I particularly stressed that I had converted to Islam entirely "through my own convictions." The significance of this has been largely ignored by the press. The point is that my conversion was not, as so many have assumed, a pre-requisite to my marriage. It was entirely my own choice. Religiously speaking, there was absolutely no compulsion for me to convert prior to my marriage. As it explicitly states in the Qur'an, a Muslim (man) is permitted to marry from "the People of the Book" - in other words, either a Christian or a Jew. Indeed, the Sunnah - which describes the life of the Prophet - shows that the messenger of Islam himself married both a Christian and a Jew during his lifetime.

Jemima became a UK Ambassador for UNICEF in September 2001 and has been on field trips to Kenya, Afghanistan and Pakistan. She has helped raise awareness about UNICEF's Breastfeeding Manifesto and End Child Exploitation campaign, including the issues of child trafficking and child labour.



Jemima Goldsmith with her sons Suleiman and Qasim

Jemima (left) with Princess Diana at Imran's cancer hospital in 1996

Commenting about life, she says:

> It would seem that a Western woman's happiness hinges largely upon her access to nightclubs, alcohol and revealing clothes; and the absence of such apparent freedom and luxuries in Islamic societies is seen as an infringement of her basic rights. However, as we all know, such superficialities have very little to do with true happiness . . . .

[**References:** Khan, Jemima. "Why I chose Islam." The Sunday Telegraph 28 May 1995; "Imran and Jemima married in Paris." The Times 17 May 1995; Khan, Sairah Irshad. "Jemima Khan." Newsline 2002; "You ask the questions: Jemima Khan." The Independent 28 Nov. 2001; "Imran Khan and Jemima divorce." BBC News 22 June. 2004.]

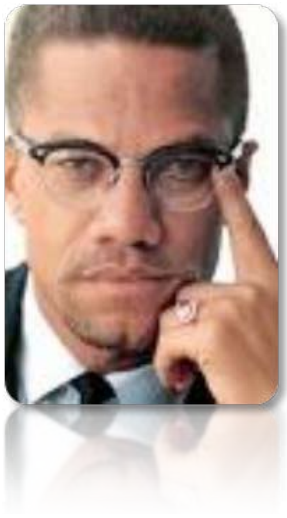
Malcolm X

"One of the first things I think young people, especially nowadays, should learn is how to see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself. Then you can come to an intelligent decision for yourself."

~ Malcolm X talking to young civil rights fighters from Mississippi (1965).

"Even his sharpest critics recognized his brilliance — often wild, unpredictable and eccentric . . ."

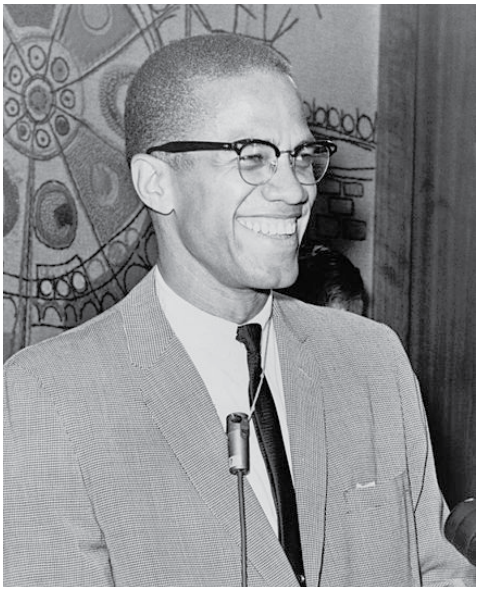
~ Comment about Malcolm X by *The New York Post*



Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska. His father, Earl Little, was an outspoken Baptist minister and avid supporter of Black Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey. Malcolm X was raised in the Seventh-Day Adventist faith by his mother.

Malcolm X's early life is coupled with dramatic moments. For instance, in 1929 their Lansing, Michigan house was burned down by a white hate group; he was six years old when his father died a violent death; his mother committed to a mental asylum; he went into a foster home; his teacher told him that his dream of becoming a lawyer was "no realistic goal for a nigger"; he dropped out of school, spent some time in Boston, Massachusetts working various odd jobs; his first real job was shoe shining; he traveled to Harlem, New York where he committed petty crimes; by 1942, he was coordinating various narcotic, prostitution and gambling rings; in 1946, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison for burglary.

Malcolm X furthered his education while in prison. It was in prison that he memorized the dictionary, read the bible and began studying - everything from archeology to genetics. While in prison, Malcolm adopted the Black Muslim faith and upon release he became an American



Black Muslim minister and a spokesman for the Nation of Islam, a deviant 'Islamic' movement. He left the Nation of Islam in 1964 and founded *Muslim Mosque, Inc.*, a religious organization, and the *Organization of Afro-American Unity*, a secular group that advocated Black Nationalism. However, several Sunni Muslims encouraged Malcolm X to learn about true Islam. Malcolm X recalls the incidents that propelled him to abandon the *Nation of Islam*. He confessed:

> At one or another college or university, usually in the informal gatherings after I had spoken, perhaps a dozen generally white-complexioned people would come up to me, identifying themselves as Arabian, Middle Eastern or North African Muslims who happened to be visiting, studying, or living in the United States. They had said to me that, my white-indicting statements notwithstanding, they felt I was sincere in considering myself a Muslim -- and they felt if I was exposed to what they always called "true Islam," I would "understand it, and embrace it." Automatically, as a follower of Elijah, I had bridled whenever this was said. But in the privacy of my own thoughts after several of these experiences, I did question myself: if one was sincere in professing a religion, why should he balk at broadening his knowledge of that religion? . . . .

One of those altruistic Muslims was Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi who driven by Prophet Muhammad's maxim "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself,"[45] advised Malcolm to embrace the Orthodox Islam. Malcolm made the pilgrimage to Mecca where he discovered a purer form of Islam hence becoming a Sunni Muslim and changed name to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. Malcolm was very happy about his *Hajj* saying he was the first American-born black person to make the *Hajj* (the pilgrimage). The *Hajj* experience brought about a radical alteration in Malcolm's outlook about white men. He said:

> There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white . . . America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white -- but the "white" attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color.

"I am and always will be a Muslim. My religion is Islam."

45. Bukhari Vol. 1, Bk. 2, No. 12.

During the pilgrimage, he wrote some letters to his loyal assistants at the newly formed Muslim Mosque in Harlem asking that his letter be duplicated and distributed to the press. He wrote:

> Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the House of Abraham, Muhammad, and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors . . . . You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth. During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) -- while praying to the same God -- with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the "white" Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana. We were truly all the same (brothers) -- because their belief in one God had removed the "white" from their minds, the 'white' from their behavior, and the 'white' from their attitude. I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man -- and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their "differences" in color. With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called "Christian" white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster -- the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves. They asked me what about the Hajj had impressed me the most . . . . I said, "The brotherhood! The people of all races, color, from all over the world coming together as one! It has proved to me the power of the One God. . . . All ate as one, and slept as one. Everything about the pilgrimage atmosphere accented the Oneness of Man under One God.

Malcolm X came from Hajj a changed man; he had gone back to his natural disposition, just like a baby with no sin, without deviations, unless changed by the environment. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, indeed said, "He who came to this House (Ka'ba) (with the intention of performing Pilgrimage), and neither spoke indecently nor did he act wickedly, would return (free from sin) as on the (very first day) his mother bore him."[46] The anti-white attitude of Malcolm X was wiped out after learning the true Islam. On December 27, 1964, Malcolm X said, "Well, this is why Islam is spreading. Islam has no color bar in it at all. There is nothing in Islam that teaches one to judge a man by the color of his skin. No matter what color you are in Islam, you are a Muslim - you are a brother."

46. Muslim Bk. 7, No. 3129. According to Bukhari Vol. 2, Bk. 26, No. 596, Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever performs Hajj for Allah's pleasure and does not have sexual relations with his wife, and does not do evil or sins then he will return (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born anew."

Malcolm X had the privilege of travelling to many places and meeting many prominent personalities. Among the countries he visited include: Saudi Arabia where he met Muhammad Faisal, the son of Prince Faisal; Ghana meeting Kwame Nkrumah; Egypt where he met Gamal Abdel Nasser; Algeria where he met Ahmed Ben Bella, principal leader of the Algerian War of Independence against France, Algerian first Prime Minister (1962 – 3) and first president of Algeria (1963 –5). Malcolm also visited Nigeria where he gave a speech at the University of Ibadan. Other countries are Ethiopia, Tanzania, Guinea, Sudan, Senegal, France, Liberia, and Morocco. On 21 September 1960, Malcolm X met with Fidel Castro in Hotel Theresa, Harlem. On 3 December 1964, Malcolm X was in the United Kingdom, participating in a debate at the Oxford Union. Malcolm X argued in the affirmative to the debate topic *"Extremism in the Defense of Liberty is No Vice; Moderation in the Pursuit of Justice is No Virtue*." The debate was televised nationally by the BBC. In the debate Malcolm X outspokenly and proudly said, "Islam is my religion. I believe in Allah and I Believe in Muhammad."

At a speaking engagement in the Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom on February 21, 1965 three gunmen rushed to Malcolm onstage and shot him 15 times at close range. The 39-year-old Malcolm X was pronounced dead on arrival at New York's Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. Malcolm X was buried at the Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York. Ossie Davis (1917–2005), an American film actor, director, poet, playwright, writer, and giant of civil rights delivered the eulogy at the funeral of Malcolm X, a tribute for "*our shining black prince"*:

> There are those who will consider it their duty, as friends of the Negro people, to tell us to revile him, to flee, even from the presence of his memory, to save ourselves by writing him out of the history of our turbulent times. Many will ask what Harlem finds to honor in this stormy, controversial and bold young captain — and we will smile. Many will say turn away — away from this man, for he is not a man but a demon, a monster, a subverter and an enemy of the black man — and we will smile. They will say that he is of hate — a fanatic, a racist — who can only bring evil to the cause for which you struggle! And we will answer and say to them: Did you ever talk to Brother Malcolm? Did you ever touch him, or have him smile at you? Did you ever really listen to him? Did he ever do a mean thing? Was he ever himself associated with violence or any public disturbance? For if you did you would know him. And if you knew him you would know why we must honor him.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shocked at the death of Malcolm X. Martin wrote:

> While we did not always see eye to eye on methods to solve the race problem, I always had a deep affection for Malcolm and felt that he had a great ability to put his finger on the existence and the root of the problem. He was an eloquent spokesman for his point of view and no one can honestly doubt that Malcolm had a great concern for the problems we face as a race.

The international press was sympathetic to the death of the greatest and most influential African American in history. For instance, *The Daily Times* of Lagos, Nigeria wrote that Malcolm X ". . . was a dedicated and consistent disciple of the movement for the emancipation of his brethren no one can doubt. . . . Malcolm X has fought and died for what he believed to be right. He will have a place in the palace of martyrs".

Most Muslims will agree that the best eulogy for Malcolm X is no other than this verse from the Qur'an:

> " And say not of those who are killed in the Way of Allâh, "They are dead." Nay, they are living, but you perceive (it) not." [2:154].

In America, Malcolm's image has been placed on a postal stamp. In addition, schools, streets, and boulevards have been named after him. There is *Malcolm X Community College* in Chicago; *Malcolm X Liberation University* in Durham, N.C.; the *Malcolm X Society*; *Malcolm X Shabazz High School* in Newark, New Jersey; *Malcolm Shabazz City High School* in Madison, Wisconsin; Reid Street in Brooklyn, New York, was changed to *Malcolm X Boulevard*; Oakland Avenue in Dallas, Texas, was renamed *Malcolm X Boulevard*; in 2005, Columbia University announced the opening of the *Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center*. In Africa its common to see transport buses named Malcolm x and people wearing T-shirts with images of Malcolm X. Above all, Malcolm X is responsible for the spread of Islam not only in the black community in the United States but to other races across the world. His conversion from the deviant *Nation of Islam* to Orthodox Islam must have had an influence on Elijah Muhammad's son, Wallace Muhammad, who, after his father's death, led the Nation of Islam's followers into orthodox Islam. And indeed, Malcolm's book *"The Autobiography of Malcolm X"* has inspired many towards Islam.

Malcolm X was married to Betty X (née Sanders) in Lansing, Michigan (1958). They had six daughters together, Attallah Shabazz, born in November 1958; Qubilah Shabazz, born in 1960 December; Ilyasah Shabazz, born in July 1962; Gamilah Shabazz, born in July 1964; and twins, Malaak Shabazz and Malikah Shabazz, born after Malcolm's death in September 1965.

Historian Robin D.G. Kelley wrote:

> Malcolm X has been called many things: Pan-Africanist, father of Black Power, religious fanatic, closet conservative, incipient socialist, and a menace to society. The meaning of his public life — his politics and ideology — is contested in part because his entire body of work consists of a few dozen speeches and a collaborative autobiography whose veracity is challenged . . . . Malcolm has become a sort of tabula rasa, or blank slate, on which people of different positions can write their own interpretations of his politics and legacy. Chuck D of the rap group Public Enemy and Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas can both declare Malcolm X their hero.

Some of his notable quotations include:

"A man who stands for nothing will fall for anything."

▫▫▫

"Nobody can give you freedom. Nobody can give you equality or justice or anything. If you're a man, you take it."

▫▫▫

"The zionist argument to justify Israel's present occupation of Arab Palestine has no intelligent or legal basis in history."

▫▫▫

"You're not to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or says it."

▫▫▫

"My alma mater was books, a good library.... I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity."

▫▫▫

"Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."

▫▫▫

"Early in life I had learned that if you want something, you had better make some noise."

▫▫▫

"We are nonviolent with people who are nonviolent with us."

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"Our objective is complete freedom, justice and equality by any means necessary."

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"Truth is on the side of the oppressed."

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"You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom."

▫▫▫

"You don't have to be a man to fight for freedom. All you have to do is to be an intelligent human being."

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"If you're not ready to die for it, put the word 'freedom' out of your vocabulary."

▫▫▫

"The price of freedom is death."

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"I'm the man you think you are.... If you want to know what I'll do, figure out what you'll do. I'll do the same thing -- only more of it."

▫▫▫

"No matter how much respect, no matter how much recognition, whites show towards me, as far as I'm concerned, as long as it is not shown to every one of our people in this country, it doesn't exist for me."

▫▫▫

"It doesn't mean that I advocate violence, but at the same time, I am not against using violence in self-defense. I don't call it violence when it's self-defense, I call it intelligence."

"How can you thank a man for giving you what's already yours? How then can you thank him for giving you only part of what is yours?"

▫▫▫

"It is a time for martyrs now, and if I am to be one, it will be for the cause of brotherhood. That's the only thing that can save this country."

▫▫▫

"It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, the capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely."

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"A new world order is in the making, and it is up to us to prepare ourselves that we may take our rightful place in it."

▫▫▫

"I'm for truth, no matter who tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I'm a human being, first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatever benefits humanity as a whole."

▫▫▫

"I believe in a religion that believes in freedom. Any time I have to accept a religion that won't let me fight a battle for my people, I say to hell with that religion."

▫▫▫

"I am a Muslim, because it's a religion that teaches you an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It teaches you to respect everybody, and treat everybody right. But it also teaches you if someone steps on your toe, chop off their foot. And I carry my religious axe with me all the time."

▫▫▫

"There is nothing in our book, the Qur'an, that teaches us to suffer peacefully. Our religion teaches us to be intelligent. Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone; but if someone lays a hand on you, send him to the cemetery."

▫▫▫

"I am and always will be a Muslim. My religion is Islam."

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"It is not only America which needs to understand Islam, but rather the whole world."

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"Anytime you see someone more successful than you are, they are doing something you aren't."

▫▫▫

"Sitting at the table doesn't make you a diner. You must be eating some of what's on that plate. Being here in America doesn't make you an American. Being born here in America doesn't make you an American."

▫▫▫

"If I can die having brought any light, having exposed any meaningful truth that will help

to destroy the racist cancer that is malignant in the body of America, then all credit is due to Allah. Only the mistakes have been mine."

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"By any means necessary."

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"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds."

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Perhaps we should ponder on one of Malcolm's noteworthy speeches: *The field Negro and the house Negro*. Because as true as he said, people in the world (whatever color they are) are categorized in this two groups. At the end of the lecture, please ask yourself whether you are a field Negro or a House Negro? Now let us invite Malcolm X to speak:

There was two kind of slaves. There was the house negro and the field negro. The house Negro, they lived in the house, with master. They dressed pretty good. They ate good, cause they ate his food, what he left. They lived in the attic or the basement, but still they lived near their master, and they loved their master, more than their master loved himself. They would give their life to save their master's house quicker than their master would. The house Negro, if the master said "we got a good house here" the house Negro say "yeah, we got a good house here". Whenever the master would say we, he'd say we. That's how you can tell a house Negro. If the master's house caught on fire, the house Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the master would. If the master got sick, the house Negro would say "What's the matter, boss, we sick" We sick! He identified himself with his master, more than the master identified with himself. And if you came to the house Negro and said "Let's run away, Let's escape, Let's separate" the house Negro would look at you and say "Man, you crazy. What you mean separate? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? Where can I eat better food than this?" There was that house Negro. In those days, he was called a house nigger. And that's what we call him today, because we still got some house niggers runnin around here. This modern house Negro loves his master. He wants to live near him. He'll pay three times as much as the house is worth just to live near his master, and then brag about "I'm the only negro out here. I'm the only one on my job. I'm the only one in this school." "You're nothing but a house Negro. And if someone come to you right now and say "Let's separate." you say the same thing that the house Negro said on the plantation. "What you mean separate? From America? This good white land? Where you gonna get a better job than you get here? I mean, this is what you say! "I di-I ain't left nothing in Africa" That's what you say. "Why, you left your mind in Africa". On that same plantation, there was the field Negro. The field Negro, those were the masses. There was always more Negros in the field as there

were Negros in the house. There Negro in the field caught hell. He ate leftovers. In the house, they ate high up on the hog. The Negro in the field didn't get nothing but what was left in the insides of the hog. They call them chit'lins nowadays. In those days, they called them what they were, guts! That's what you were, a gut-eater. And some of you are still gut-eaters. The field Negro was beaten, from morning til night. He lived in a shack, in a hut. He wore cast-off clothes. He hated his master. I say, he hated his master. He was intelligent. That house Negro loved his master. But that field Negro, remember, they were in the majority, and they hated their master. When the house caught on fire, he didn't try to put it out, that field Negro prayed for a wind. For a breeze. When the master got sick, the field Negro prayed that he died. If someone come to the field Negro and said, "Let's separate, let's run." He didn't say "Where we going?" he said "Any place is better than here". We got field Negros in America today. I'm a field Negro. The masses are the field Negros. When they see this man's house on fire, we don't hear these little Negros talkin bout "Our Government is in trouble. They say the Government is in trouble." Imagine a Negro, "Our Government". I even heard one say "Our astronauts." They won't even let him near the plant, and "Our astronauts". "Our neighbors" That's a Negro that's out of his mind. That's a Negro that's out of his mind! Just cause the slave master in that day, used Tom, to keep the field Negroes in check. The same ol slavemaster today has Negros who are nothing but modern Uncle Toms. 20th century Uncle Toms to keep you and me in check. Keep us under control. Keep us passive and peaceful. And nonviolent. That's Tom making you nonviolent. It's like when you go to the dentist and the man is going to take your tooth. You're going to fight him when he start pulling. So they squirt some stuff in your jaw called novocane, to make you think they're not doing anything to you. So you sit there and because you got all that novocane in your jaw, you suffer peacefully. Hahahaha. There's nothing in our book, the Qur'an, as you call it, Koran, that teaches us to suffer peacefully. Our religion teaches us to be intelligent. Be peaceful. Be courteous. Obey the law. Respect everyone. But if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery! That's a good religion. In fact, that's that old-time religion. That's the one that ma and pa used to talk about. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and a head for a head and a life for a life. That's a good religion. And doesn't anybody, no one resist that kind of religion being taught but a wolf who intends to make you his meal. This is the way it is with the white man in America. He's a wolf and you're his sheep. Anytime a shepherd, a pastor, teach you and me not to run from the white man, and at the same time teach us don't fight the white man, he's a traitor, to you and me. Don't lay down our life all by itself, no, preserve your life. It's the best thing you got. And if you got to give it up, let it be Even Steven....

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Fidelma O'Leary

O'Leary, a green-eyed blonde from the United States, is an Irish-born professor of neuroscience at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. She was educated at the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston B.E. (Engineering), U.C.C., National University of Ireland.

O'Leary started to question the religious beliefs and practices she was raised on, and she began to study religion and while in college, she reverted to Islam. She had once wondered, "If Jesus (peace and blessings be upon him) was God, how could he worship God?" Upon her reversion to Islam, her devout Catholic family was not supportive to her decision. The Irish Catholic revert to Islam says:

". . . Islam worked for me and I was completely at peace with my religion"

> Islam is a development of the faith that I already had. Islam worked for me and I was completely at peace with my religion. [But it was] a long journey filled with jihad [and] a struggle to surrender my will to the will of God.

Her Teaching Interests include Physiology, Anatomy and an upper level Neuroscience elective. She is the mother of two, Yousef, 22, and Sara, 20, both of whom now attend the University of Texas and are raised Muslim. Dr. Fidelma O'Leary is one of the pilgrims featured in the widely acclaimed National Geographic documentary film *"Inside Mecca"*

Fidelma O'Leary (bottom right) joins other pilgrims in prayer in the Plain of Arafat, where the entire day is spent in devotions.

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Yusuf Estes

"Some have asked how I could have turned my back on Jesus . . . ."

~ Yusuf Estes

Skip Estes was born in Ohio in 1944 and moved to Texas in 1949. He grew up in a Protestant Christian family; as members of *the Disciples of Christ*. Skip Estes had a career in the music industry, entertainment, marketing, music instructor and music minister and owned several companies including *The Estes Piano and Organ Company*.

In 1991, Estes converted to Islam while trying to convert an Egyptian Muslim named Muhammad to Christianity. He changed name to Yusuf Estes. His wife, father, daughters and step mother, also turned to Islam. Thousands of conversions have occurred at his hands by the will of God and once 135 people converted to Islam at the same time.

Skip Estes was baptized at the age of 12 in Pasadena, Texas. His father, who became an ordained minister in the 1970s, was very active in supporting church work, especially church school programs. Skip's parents knew many TV evangelists and preachers and had even visited Oral Roberts and helped in the building of the "Prayer Tower" in Tulsa, Oklahoma. They were strong supporters of Jimmy Swaggart, Jim and Tammy Fae Baker, Jerry Fallwell, John Haggi and Pat Robertson.

As a teenager, Skip did a serious research into religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Metaphysics, Native American beliefs with the exception of Islam. He states the following unanticipated disclosure:

> Strangely enough, the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible . . . . I would ask preachers or ministers to give me some sort of an idea how 'one' could figure out to become 'three' or how God Himself, Who can do anything He Wills to do, cannot just forgive people's sins, but rather and had to become a man, come down on earth, be a human, and then take on the sins of all people; keeping in mind that all along He is still God of the whole universe and does as He Wills to do, both in and outside of the universe as we know it. They never seemed to be able to come up with anything other than opinions or strange analogies.

In the early 1991, Skip's father began doing business with an Egyptian man. Skip was asked by his father to meet him but he hesitated because he didn't want to have an encounter with "hijackers, kidnappers, bombers, terrorists." Skip just couldn't imagine meeting a Muslim. "We can change this man to Christian," an idea flashed his mind. Hence, he decided to meet the man from Egypt with undisclosed mission of converting him to Christianity. On the day of their meeting, Skip was armed with a Bible, a big shiny cross and cap with "Jesus Is Lord!" on it. Skip agreed to do

business with Muhammad; consequently they spent time together on business trips across the northern part of Texas. It was this platform that Skip and Muhammad discussed issues pertaining beliefs. As a result, Skip came to learn that Muslims believe Jesus to be a true messenger of God; born in a miraculous birth, without male intervention; that Jesus was the messiah; he ascended to heaven; and that he will descend back before the end of the world.

At some point, Skip invited Muhammad to go stay at their big home. Another person Skip invited at their home was a Catholic priest who had been a missionary for over 12 years to south and Central America, Mexico and New York's Hell's Kitchen. At the home, they would gather around the kitchen table after dinner every night to discuss religion. Skip would bring his Revised Standard Version of the Bible, his father would bring his King James Version of the Bible, Skip's wife would come with a different version of the Bible, and the priest had the Catholic Bible which has 7 more books than the Protestant Bible. And the issue of which Bible was the right one or the most correct one would emerge, to which different opinions were given. When he asked Muhammad how many versions the Quran has, Skip was surprised to hear that there was only one Qur'an which has never changed since the time of Prophet Muhammad. More bewilderment came when he was told that the Qur'an had been memorized from cover to cover by Muslims.

One day the Catholic priest asked Muhammad if he might accompany him to the mosque to see what it was like and together they went to the mosque. Another day, the priest and Muhammad made another trip to the mosque but this time they stayed for a very long time. When they arrived at Skip's house, Skip could only recognize Muhammad, and not the man wearing a white robe and a white cap, walking alongside Muhammad. As his vision became clear, Skip was shocked to find it was the priest. "Pete?" Skip shouted, "Did you become a 'Moslem? The priest had embraced Islam. Skip went to talk to his wife about the whole subject but the wife said that she too was going to embrace Islam because she knew it was the truth. Shocked as he was, he went downstairs, asked Muhammad to go outside the house for a discussion. They talked through the whole night and by morning, according to Skip, he had realized Islam was the truth. It didn't end there. Skip had to earnestly pray to God saying: "O God. If you are there, guide me, guide me." Around 11:00 a.m. that morning, Skip stood before two witnesses; Father Peter Jacob, the ex-priest and Muhammad Abdul-Rahman and announced the testimony of entering into Islam. Minutes later, his wife followed along and embraced Islam. A few more months later, Skip's father embraced Islam. Skip's children were later taken out of the Christian school and placed in Muslim schools. The entire household had entered into Islam. Skip says: "Only by His (God's) Mercy were we all guided to see the real truth of Islam, by removing the coverings over our ears and the blinders on our eyes, no longer having seals over our hearts - He was guiding us now."

Yusuf Estes' father who also converted to Islam

". . . But when my prayers were for 'Guidance' from the 'One Above'. I found success in 'Total Submission' to the Will of Him . . ."

In 1999, Yusuf Estes became National Muslim Chaplain in Washington, DC. Since 2005, Yusuf Estes has been appearing on many channels including the *IslamChannel*, *Peace TV* and *Huda TV*

which are 24/7 Islamic channels broadcasting in many countries around the globe, via satellite and the website. Moreover, he has been a Volunteer Imam in a Texas military installation; a Delegate to the United Nations Peace Summit for Religious Leaders in August 2000; University guest speaker; Television program producer and director, preacher, syndicated television programs on satellite and cable networks; developed many hi-tech Islamic websites, including chatrooms, video conferencing, news sites, reference sites and entertainment sites for youth.

Yusuf Estes has delivered thousands of lectures around the world. Some of his audio/video lectures, and which can freely be downloaded from the internet (e.g. at www.aswatalislam.net or http://nadeem.lightuponlight.com), include the following:

►My Journey to Islam - before & after Islam
►Why Priests and Preachers are Coming to Islam
►Purpose of Life
►The Beauty of Islam - Understanding why bad things happen to good people
►Women in Islam Part-2 - Why can men marry more than one wife, Terms, conditions, and rights of women in Islam
►What Muslims Believe About God
►Proofs of Islam
►Who is going to Paradise
►What is the Hardest Part of Being a Muslim
►September 11th
►It's a Great Time to be a Muslim! - The life of this world is a prison for a believer and paradise for a non-believer
►Islam Exposed
►Islam and Terrorism
►How to Bring People to Islam After 9/11
►How do You get Close to Allah
►Future of Islam in America -Actions speak louder than words
►Satan's art of Deception
►What is Islam?
►Muslims in the Modern Age
►What are the three questions that you are going to be asked when you die

The following is a poem written by Yusuf Estes:

"Before & After – Islam"

I see now my quest in life had been in vain.
I desired pleasure and material gain.
For those around me, my goals where plain,
I tried to achieve them all without regard to pain.
I wanted the glitter and glamour this world provides.
I couldn't see the treasures that all this hide.
My 'quest for wealth' - could never buy what I needed most.
My 'search for fame' - was like trying to catch a ghost.
But when my prayers were for 'Guidance' from the 'One above'.
I found success in 'Total Submission' to the will of Him -- in Love.
I found all the riches, glory and happiness that one might require,
But most of all I discovered my real heart's desire.
I found that which is the secret of life's lease,
I found the One who gave all, when He gave me Peace.
It finally came after all those years of trouble and strife
That to do "Islam" is the purpose of life.

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www.shareislam.com
www.islamtomorrow.com

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Sara Bokker

"I could never dress like that."

~ Sara Bokker (before embracing Islam) commenting on veiled Muslim women.

Sara Bokker is a former actress, model, fitness instructor, and (and now) an activist. She is an American woman, who had lived in Florida and on the South Beach of Miami. She abandoned her bikini, a symbol of her liberty as she used to perceive it, for *niqab* (face veil).

Despite being raised as a Lutheran, Sara didn't believe in the "church stuff" such as singing, worshiping pictures of crosses and Jesus, and eating "the body and blood of Christ." As she says, "It just did not make any sense to me." As years passed by, she found herself on the wrong side of history. Stress and confusion were her two best companions. Sara had much disgust and hatred for herself. She turned to alcohol, dropped out of college and at the age of 19 she left South Dakota, where she grew up, for Florida by herself. Still, sadness followed her while in Florida, and she turned to psychology, self-help books and tapes, and exercise.

Trying to conform with the Florida lifestyle, Sara found herself a slave of her looks. Her money was mostly consumed by hairdresser, manicurist, gym, mall, and other beauty-making expenses. "It cost a lot of time and money to look good." She says. Even falling in love did not alleviate sadness and stress. Then she began looking into all types and kinds of religions. She came to be interested mostly in metaphysical studies, and some sort of Eastern-type meditation and yoga. She adhered to those but she found herself craving for more than that. Eventually she went back to college, where she developed a passion for International Relations. It was in college where she learnt the ugly truth about "American History" and "US Foreign Policy." She says, "I was horrified with all the injustice, racism, and oppression. It broke my heart. I was so saddened by the suffering in the world. I decided I must do something about it." She embarked on a self-appointed duty to educate the local high school and college students about the injustice in the Middle East. She went as far as organizing local activists to travel to Washington, DC, to protest the upcoming war in Iraq.

"Yesterday, the bikini was the symbol of my liberty, when in actuality it only liberated me from my spirituality and true value as a respectable human being."

During this process, she met a Muslim man who had dedicated his life to fight for justice and human rights. The man had started his own organization, to which Sara worked as a volunteer so that she could learn more and help in the struggle. As they worked together, the Muslim guy taught Sara stories of Prophet Muhammad, his disciples, and the civilization of Islam. "I was shocked to hear these stories, as I knew nothing about this history. I became enchanted with Islam and read all I could about it, eventually reading the Qur'an." She said.

Finally she found the truth in Islam. To all her queries about Islam, she got the answers which, according to her, were "very logical and amazingly functional." She discovered that Islam is a complete way of life possessing guidance and answers to even the smallest of details, like how to eat and sleep.

In January 2003, at the age of 29, Sara reverted to Islam. "A blanket of comforting peace embraced me." She explains the experience, "I felt so calm and sure and full of joy. All of a sudden I had a purpose in life, a reason to exist." Sara pronounced her *Shahadah* (testimony of faith) at a public groundbreaking for a new mosque. And as soon as she said the testimony, two rainbows appeared in the sky! The Muslim sisters present went to hug her. "I was crying from so much joy," She says. The following day, eager to show the world her new religion, she went to a local Middle Eastern store to buy hijabs (headscarves) and dresses appropriate for a Muslim woman. From that day forward, Sara dressed decently. She walked down the same streets and neighborhoods where, days earlier, she had walked in shorts, bikini, and other indecent western attires. "Free at last!" she said. "I had broken the chains of fashion and physical enslavement enforced by a superficial society. Honestly, I felt as if a huge weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I no longer felt the pressure to dress and look better than everyone else." This is what she advices women who wish to have true liberation:

> As an ex non-Muslim, I insist on women's right to equally know about hijab, its virtues, and the peace and happiness it brings to a woman's life as it did to mine. Yesterday, the bikini was the symbol of my liberty, when in actuality it only liberated me from my spirituality and true value as a respectable human being. I couldn't be happier to shed my bikini in South Beach and the "glamorous" Western lifestyle to live in peace with my Creator and enjoy living among fellow humans as a worthy person. It is why I choose to wear *niqab* (face veil), and why I will die defending my inalienable right to wear it. Today, *niqab* is the new symbol of woman's liberation to find who she is, what her purpose is, and the type of relation she chooses to have with her Creator. To women who surrender to the ugly stereotype against the Islamic modesty of Hijab, I say: You don't know what you are missing.

Sara was married by the man who introduced her to Islam exactly one month after her reversion. As a couple, they continue to work against injustice throughout the world. They have been travelling throughout the Middle East and they have now moved from America to Egypt to live in an Islamic environment. "My heart is complete. The sadness and loneliness are gone. I now feel I belong. I am somebody." She says.

Currently, Sara is the Director of Communications at *The March For Justice*, a co-founder of *The Global Sisters Network*, and producer of *Shock & Awe Gallery*, a historical documentation and evidence of the U.S./

British Crime of the Century.

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Suhaib Webb

"I had a lot of trouble accepting God as a human being."

~ Suhaib Webb.

He was born William Webb in 1972 in Oklahoma, where he grew up in a Christian family. He became a successful local Hip-Hop DJ, making records with various artists and bands. During this period of his life, he was a member of a gang and turned his back on religion. Commenting on Hip-Hop, Webb had this to say:

Hip-hop was more of a social movement than it is now. Now it's all, 'I got girls, I got some nice gold, nice car, I'll kill you and I love my mamma.' (Back in the) '80s and '90s, there was more of a sociopolitical, almost Afro-centric feel, which was kind of laced with the teachings of Islam due to the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X.

Funny enough, his grandfather was a preacher. He recalls:

> I had a lot of trouble accepting God as a human being or creation. Even as a young child I would ask my mother questions. Suddenly, God is one of three instead of God just being God. So I became a little confused. How could the prophets before Jesus go to heaven if they couldn't worship Jesus? If (the criteria for heaven was) worshipping and recognizing him as a deity and (as) the key to paradise?

Webb encountered Islam through some Muslim contacts and after a three-year period of exposure to Islam through local Muslim acquaintances, he reverted to Islam and took the name Suhaib. That was in 1992 at the age of twenty. In fact, Webb got his

"Even as a young child I would ask my mother questions. How could the prophets before Jesus go to heaven if they couldn't worship Jesus? If [the criteria for heaven was] worshipping and recognizing him as a deity and [as] the key to paradise?"

first copy of the Qur'an at age 17 and as he says, "I read the Qur'an for three years in the restroom because I was scared my mother would pulverize me if she saw the Qur'an in her house".

After his reversion to Islam, he left his career as a DJ and studied at the University of Central Oklahoma, where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Education. After studying Islam in the USA and working as an Imam and teacher, in 2004, Suhaib Webb, his wife and children moved to Cairo, to study at Al-Azhar Islamic University. Suhaib has also spent 10 years studying with a Senegalese scholar and memorized the Qur'an under his guidance. He has studied with well-known *sheikhs* (Muslim scholars) in the US and United Kingdom and traveled to Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia to learn more. He is currently a lecturer at the Islamic American University (IAU) in Santa Clara, California. Suhaib Webb has been an active member of the Muslim American Society. He is the author of the best selling audio CD album *Mothers of the Believers*. Other lectures by Suhaib include:

- ►Servants of the Merciful (*Ebaad ur Rahman)*
- ►Allah will take care of you
- ►The Family of Umm Sulaym
- ►Successful Marriages
- ►Articulating Our Role as American Muslims
- ►Message to Those Seeking Guidance: Imam al-Muhasibi
- ►Living in the shade of the Qur'an
- ►Some Lessons from the Hijra
- ►5 Things you can do to taste the sweetness of Ramadhan
- ►The Implications of The Shahadah
- ►Life of Our Prophet (series containing 32 lectures)

Website

www.suhaibwebb.com

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Ingrid Mattson

"Among Muslims throughout the world, there are many sincere pious men and women; there are also criminals and hypocrites."

~ Ingrid Mattson

Ingrid Mattson, the sixth of seven children, grew up as a good, middle-class Roman Catholic school girl in Kitchener, Canada, a suburban community about 60 miles southwest of Toronto. She attended a Catholic girls high school and took piano lessons at the convent. Ingrid stopped attending Mass at the age of 16 after inquiring about Catholicism and spirituality to which she was given unsatisfactory answers.

Then as a determined agnostic, Ingrid Mattson went to study philosophy and the fine arts at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. Her first encounter with Muslims was in 1986, while studying in Paris. The warmth, dignity and generosity of the Muslims she met must have produced an influence in her life. "What I recognized was that, among their other wonderful qualities, they were the most naturally generous people I had ever known." She said about the Muslims she met. She then plunged into reading of books about Islam and took classes in Arabic. In her personal study of Islam she came across Fazlur Rahman's *Islam* in a bookstore. "It was his book and his encouragement that inspired me to start on the path to scholarship that I have found so rewarding," She recalls. When she read the Qur'an, Ingrid found herself wallowed in amazement. And in 1987, as a college senior, she embraced Islam. "This religious community was giving me the framework for my spiritual experience, and so I entered into it," she said in an interview.

After she graduated from college, she volunteered to teach Afghan women in a refugee camp of about 100,000 people in Peshawar, Pakistan. It was there where she met and married Amer Aatek, an Egyptian engineer working to install a water system in the camp. In 1989, she enrolled in the University of Chicago as a Ph.D. student and in 1999, she received her doctorate in Islamic Studies from the University. Presently, she is a professor of Islamic studies and director of Islamic chaplaincy at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. She is the head of ISNA (Islamic Society of North America), one of the largest Muslim organizations in America.

In 1995, she was an adviser to the Afghan delegation to the United Nations Commission on the status of women. In 2001, she was elected Vice-President of ISNA and in 2006 she was elected President of the organization. Dr. Mattson is the first revert to Islam and the first female to lead the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). Professor Mattson is a contributor to *The Muslim World Journal*. She is the author of *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life* [Paperback: 272 pages]. Dr. Mattson lives in Connecticut with her husband and two children.

Some articles, lectures, and reviews by Ingrid Matson include:

- ►Respecting the Qur'an
- ►A call for moral leadership: Imagining a new heroism
- ►Comments on cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad
- ►Stopping oppression: an Islamic Obligation
- ►Faith in the Face of Terror - Multi-Faith Reflections on Meaning
- ►Faith, Justice and Terrorism

Among the lectures she has delivered are:

- ►Gender Equity-The Islamic Perspective
- ►Sharia in the Modern World
- ►Changes Within Us
- ►Extremism And Moderation
- ►Impact of Sept.11th
- ►What is Islamic Law (Sharia)?
- ►Building The Faith

Dr Ingrid Mattson, President of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) - Jewish-Muslim Dialogue

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Kareem Abdul–Jabar

"In my opinion, he is the most valuable player in the history of the game. No player of comparable size and ability was ever as quick and maneuverable, but his unselfish team play has been equally impressive."

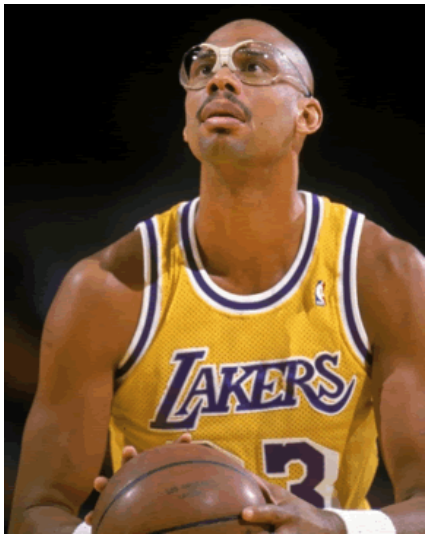
~ John Wooden

"Why judge anymore? When a man has broken records, won championships, endured tremendous criticism and responsibility, why judge? Let's toast him as the greatest player ever."

~ Pat Riley

Ferdinand Lewis Alcindor Jr. was born on April 16, 1947 in New York. He attained high school education at Power Memorial in New York, and college education at University of California, Los Angeles.

Lewis Alcindor was a Professional basketball player and rated one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA (National Basketball Association) History. He was NBA's all-time leading scorer with 38,387 points; first and only player named NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Basketball Tournament's Most Outstanding Player three times (1967-69); NCAA outlawed the dunk shot because of his dominance at the center for UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles); practiced yoga and martial arts as part of overall fitness program, including *Jeet Kune Do* under Bruce Lee and as a matter of fact he appeared as a hulking foe to Bruce Lee in the film *Game of Death*; he gave the game the *skyhook*, the shot that changed basketball with the help of which he was to score more than thirty eight thousand points in regular; worked on the *Fort Apache Indian Reservation* as an assistant coach; among other films and TV shows, he acted in *Airplane!* He had played 20 seasons in the league with the *Milwaukee Bucks* and *Los Angeles Lakers* and by the time the 7 foot 2 basketball player retired in 1989, he had won 6 championship rings and was a six-time Most Valuable Player; no one blocked more shots, scored more points, or logged more seasons than him; he's also a writer, a historian, and a worldwide ambassador for the basketball; on February 18, 2000, Abdul-Jabbar was named an assistant coach of the *LA Clippers*; he has worked as a consultant for the *Indiana Pacers*, and in the spring of 2002, he signed on to coach the *USBL Oklahoma Storm*, an NBA feeder league team. In 1995 Abdul-Jabbar was elected to the *Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame*.



His education background goes back to St. Jude's parish elementary school, where he also excelled in baseball, swimming, and ice skating. Many of the local New York preparatory schools desired Kareem to join their institutions but he settled with *Power Memorial Academy*, a private Catholic high school. With the abundance of college offers Kareem heeded the advice of notable African Americans such as Arthur Ashe, Jackie Robinson, and the then Undersecretary of the United Nations Ralph Bunche to accept the scholarship from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). In 1972 he was studying Arabic at Harvard. His intellectual capacity is manifest in the six bestselling history books Kareem has authored which were intended to popularize the contributions of African-Americans to American culture and history. Abdul-Jabbar's books include *"Black Profiles in Courage: A Legacy of African-American Achievement"*; *"Brothers in Arms: The Epic Story of the 761st Tank Battalion, WWII's Forgotten Heroes"*; *"A Season on the Reservation,"* which chronicles his time teaching basketball and history on an Apache Indian reservation in White River, Ariz.; and the current New York Times and Los Angeles Times bestseller, *"On the Shoulders of Giants: My Journey Through the Harlem Renaissance."*

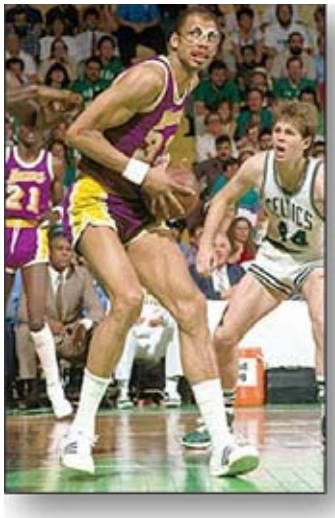
Before the 1971-72 season, Alcindor converted from Catholicism to Islam and took the name Kareem Abdul-Jabbar which means "noble, the noble one, servant of the Almighty." But why did he change his name after reverting to Islam? The reason is revealed in *Playboy* magazine where he said:

> . . .[I was] Latching on to something that was part of my heritage, because many of the slaves who were brought here were Muslims. My family was brought to America by a French planter named Alcindor, who came here from Trinidad in the 18th Century. My people were Yoruba, and their culture survived slavery . . . . My father found out about that when I was a kid, and it gave me all I needed to know that, hey, I was somebody, even if nobody else knew about it. When I was a kid, no one would believe anything positive that you could say about black people. And that's a terrible burden on black people, because they don't have an accurate idea of their history, which has been either suppressed or distorted.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar wrote a book titled *Kareem*, wherein he gives us a glimpse on how he was gravitated towards Islam:

> (Growing up in America,) I eventually found that . . . emotionally, spiritually, I could not afford to be a racist. As I got older, I gradually got past believing that black was either the best or the worst. It just was. The black man who had the most profound influence on me was Malcolm X. I had read "Muhammad Speaks", the Black Muslim newspaper, but even in the early sixties, their brand of racism was unacceptable to me. It held the identical hostility as white racism, and for all my anger and resent meant, I understood that rage can do very little to change anything. It's just a continual negative spiral that feeds on itself, and who needs that . . . . Malcolm X was different. He'd made a trip to Mecca, and realized that Islam embraced people of all color. He was assassinated in 1965, and though I didn't know much about him then, his death hit hard because I knew he was talking about black pride, about self-help and lifting ourselves up. And I liked his attitude of non-subservience . . . . Malcolm X's autobiography came out in 1966, when I was a freshman at UCLA, and I read it right before my nineteenth birthday. It made a bigger impression on me than any book I had ever read, turning me around totally. I started to look at things differently, instead of accepting the mainstream viewpoint . . . . (Malcolm) opened the door

> for real cooperation between the races, not just the superficial, paternalistic thing. He was talking about real people doing real things, black pride and Islam. I just grabbed on to it. And I have never looked back.



In an Interview with *TalkAsia*, a program aired on CNN, Kareem was asked about the importance of his spiritual journey and he said:

> Well as a spiritual journey, I don't think I would have been able to be as successful as I was as an athlete if it were not for Islam. It gave me a moral anchor, it enabled me to not be materialistic, it enabled me to see more what was important in the world. And all of that was reinforced by people, very important people to me: Coach John Wooden, my parents, all reinforced those values. And it enabled me to live my life a certain way and not get distracted.

Stan Grant, the CNN interviewer then asked: "When you embraced Islam, was it difficult for other people to come to terms with that? Did that create a distance between you and others?" The response was:

> For the most part it was. I didn't try to make it hard on people; I did not have a chip on my shoulder. I just wanted people to understand I was Muslim, and that's what I felt was the best thing for me. If they could accept that I could accept them. I didn't . . . it wasn't like if you're going to become my friend you have to become Muslim also. No, that was not it. I respect people's choices just as I hope they respect my choices.

He was asked whether his reverting to Islam was an intensely political decision as it has been for a lot of black Americans and Kareem answered:

> That was not part of my journey. My choosing Islam was not a political statement, it was a spiritual statement. What I learned about the Bible and the Qur'an made me see that the Qur'an was the next revelation from the Supreme Being - and I chose to interpret that and follow that. I don't think it had anything to do with trying to pigeon hole anyone, and deny them the ability to practice as they saw fit. The Qur'an tells us that Jews, Christians, and Muslims: Muslims are supposed to treat all of them the same way because we all believe in the same Prophets and heaven and hell would be the same for all of us. And that's what it's supposed to be about.

Stan Grant ended the interview with this question: "If you had to impart one piece of knowledge to someone, something that helped you in your career that you could pass on, what would that be?" And Kareem said: "Knowledge is power. Take the time to know what you're doing and have some commitment to it. And it will not ever be a disappointment and if you know what you're doing you'll be able to do it well and you'll find self satisfaction."

Abdul Khaalis, a former jazz drummer and founder of the Hanafi *Madhhab* in Washington, D.C., was one of Kareem's influences to Islam. Kareem had been raised to take authority seriously, whether that of nuns, teachers, or coaches. Hence Kareem would attentively take the teachings

of Abdul Khaalis, a man who is credited to have given Alcindor the name Abdul-Jabbar. Kareem undertook his own study of the Qur'an, for which he learnt basic Arabic. In 1973 he travelled to Libya and Saudi Arabia to get a better grasp of the language and to learn about Islam. He stated clearly that his name Alcindor was a slave name, literally that of the slave-dealer who had taken his family away from West Africa to Dominica to Trinidad, from where they were brought to America. Kareem is a Sunni Muslim who adheres to *Hanafi* school of thought.

"What I learned about the Bible and the Qur'an made me see that the Qur'an was the next revelation from the Supreme Being . . ."

In a different occasion with a different host, an interview with Kareem went like this:

Interviewer: You were raised Catholic, you went to Catholic schools, and you made a decision in the early '70s to become a Muslim. How did that come about?

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar: My interest in Islam started when I was a freshman at UCLA and I got the opportunity to read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and it really made me understand that there was a lot more to monotheism than what I knew being raised as a Roman Catholic. I found in Islam that I certainly had a limited view of what monotheism was about, and it made me curious enough to read the Koran and see that it probably was something that I needed to investigate more completely. I was won over by the arguments. The fact that the Roman Catholic Church was greatly invested in the slave trade did not help me want to remain Catholic, and because of that, I changed my affiliation.

Interviewer: What has it meant to you to be a Muslim?

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar: I think Islam has given me a moral foundation. It gave me a way of trying to balance my own personal ambitions, what you want and need in the world, with some type of morality and a way of viewing what life is about. It certainly doesn't help, at this point now, that there are so many problems with the Islamic world. But I think those have to do with politics, and the Islamic world's reaction to colonialism and being exploited, a lot more than really is based on religious belief. Because all of the religions that come from Abraham basically have the same message. Not very much difference if you can study it objectively, but that is hard to do in this day and age when there is so much politics and nationalism and resentment for things that have gone on centuries ago. It's kind of hard to overcome.

In a *TIME Room*, someone asked Kareem the question: ". . . how difficult has it been to be a Muslim in America and that, too, being African-American?" Kareem Abdul-Jabbar begun:

Well, I think race has been a burden for black Americans, a heavy burden. Being Muslim has also been a challenge because so many people do not understand Islam. I feel that there has been progress made since I was a boy on matters of race, but we have a long way to go. I think more people today understand what Islam is about. To make distinctions about radical people bent on terrorism -- those people come from every background and every religious group.

Despite being one of the most visible Muslims in the American public arena, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is also a tireless worker for various philanthropic causes and has devoted a large amount of time to helping children and steering them towards getting a good education. He has participated in initiatives that helped fight hunger and illiteracy.

Some of his notable quotations include:

"You can't win unless you learn how to lose."

▫▫▫

"I'm not comfortable being preachy, but more people need to start spending as much time in the library as they do on the basketball court."

▫▫▫

"One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man cannot make a team."

▫▫▫

"I try to do the right thing at the right time. They may just be little things, but usually they make the difference between winning and losing."

▫▫▫

"Black people don't have an accurate idea of their history, which has been either suppressed or distorted."

▫▫▫

"I can do something else besides stuff a ball through a hoop. My biggest resource is my mind."

▫▫▫

"I saw Islam as the correct way to live, and I chose to try to live that way." [Response to the question; Why did you choose to be a Muslim?]

▫▫▫

"I tell kids to pursue their basketball dreams, but I tell them to not let that be their only dream."

▫▫▫

"I think race has been a burden for black Americans. Being Muslim has also been a challenge because so many people do not understand Islam."

▫▫▫

"I think that the good and the great are only separated by the willingness to sacrifice."

▫▫▫

"I would suggest that teachers show their students concrete examples of the negative effects of the actions that gangsta rappers glorify."

▫▫▫

"I'm still my parent's child, I'm still me, but I made a choice. I evolved into Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. I think it has to do with evolution."

▫▫▫

"My choosing Islam was not a political statement; it was a spiritual statement."

▫▫▫

"Your mind is what makes everything else work."

▫▫▫

Abdul-Jabbar was married to Habiba Abdul- Jabbar (nee Janice Brown), and they had three children Habiba, Sultana and Kareem. They were divorced in 1978. He has another son Amir with Cheryl Pistono. Adam is yet another son of Abdul-Jabbar.

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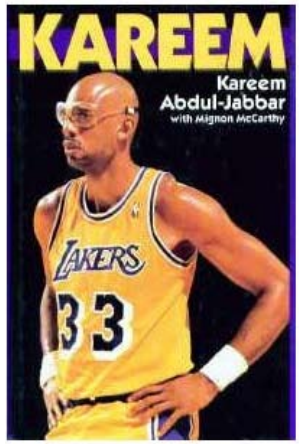
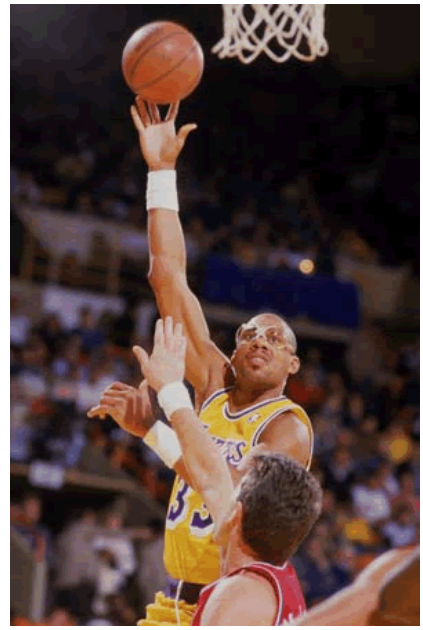


Kareem
By Kareem Abdul-Jabbar,
[Hardcover: 233 pages]



Kareem Sky Hook

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Susanne Osthoff

". . . (My government) was aiming all its efforts at protecting the lives of Susanne Osthoff and her driver . . . . The government is doing everything in its power to bring the German citizen and her driver as soon as possible to safety . . . ."

~ Chancellor Angela Merkel during her first major speech to parliament.

More than 200 foreigners have been kidnapped since the US invasion-turned-occupation of Iraq in March 2003. Many of the foreign hostages get killed by their captors. Then it was the turn of this former German hostage who had spent 24 days in the hands of captors calling themselves *'The Brigade of the Earthquake'* in the war-torn Iraq!

Susanne Osthoff (born 7 March 1962), is a trained archaeologist and humanitarian aid worker, who has been working tirelessly for many years to aid the Iraqi people and to preserve the

cultural treasures of Iraq. She studied Near Eastern archaeology and Semitic languages at the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich (Germany) and in the course of her studies, she got the privilege of visiting Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen to take part in excavations. The ruins of the Sumerian city of Isin in Iraq was her former study site where she worked as a graduate student with the archaeologist Barthel Hrouda of the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich until 1990. Susanne Osthoff worked as an archaeologist in Iraq since 1991.

"I was so happy to know that I had not fallen into the hands of criminals."

She was married to an Iraqi man from the region near the Iraqi-Syrian border but the couple divorced. Susanne Osthoff who embraced Islam is a fluent Arabic speaker who plainly considers Iraq to be her home. Susanne Osthoff together with a fellow archaeologist had planned to go to Isin in October 2004 but decided it was too dangerous, after Osthoff's former husband advised them against it.

On 25, November 2005, the German archeologist/aid worker was taken hostage becoming the first German national to be kidnapped in Iraq. Four days later, her kidnappers issued a video showing Osthoff and her driver sitting blindfolded on the ground, with armed men , one holding a rocket-propelled grenade launcher. The kidnappers have reportedly threatened to kill Osthoff and the driver, if Germany does not cease all contacts with Iraq's government. At the time, Germany's main activity in Iraq was a police training program. On 19 December 2005, her Iraqi kidnappers freed her, unharmed.

Susanna Osthoff, kneeling, in an image taken from a video made by her kidnappers. Her driver is blindfolded next to her.

Susanne Osthoff and her daughter

Commenting on the captors, known as *'The Brigade of the Earthquake'*, Susanne Osthoff said that her kidnappers were not criminals and only demanded German humanitarian aid for Iraq's Sunni Arabs. They wanted aid to build schools and hospitals in the area northwest of Baghdad populated by Sunni Muslims. "They said we don't want money . . . Maybe we want from Germany . . . hospitals and schools in the Sunni triangle (area northwest of Baghdad), and they would like to get money in the form of humanitarian aid." Said the former Iraq-hostage Susanne Osthoff.

The kidnappers treated her well and told her that they did not intend to harm women or children. They also respected that Osthoff is Muslim. The kidnappers told Osthoff not to be afraid since her kidnapping was politically motivated. "Do not be afraid. We do not harm women or children and you are a Muslim," the captors said. Speaking to Aljazeera satellite channel, Osthoff said; "I was so happy to know that I had not fallen into the hands of criminals."

Despite being held captive for three weeks by a Sunni gang, Susanne was determined to return to Iraq to get back to work. She announced on al-Jazeera television that she would go back to her work in northern Iraq, trying to set up a German cultural centre in Arbil. In her interview on the public television channel ARD, when asked for what she most wished upon her release, Osthoff, a frequent visitor to Iraq since the mid-1980s, responded: "To see Iraq in peace, . . . to see it how I have seen it in the past."

10 days after her release, Susanne Osthoff appeared on German public television channel ZDF entirely covered in a black headscarf with only a pair of slits for her eyes.

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Dr. Timothy J. Winter

"Religion is about truth, and unless truth be properly discerned and defended, nothing else will come right."

~Dr. Timothy J. Winter

Dr. Timothy J. Winter (born 1960) is a British native and a revert to Islam. He studied at the prestigious Westminster School in London, UK and later at the University of Cambridge, where he graduated with first class honours in 1983. He received his master's Degree from Cambridge University at England and later studied at Azhar; one of the oldest universities in the world. He lived in Cairo for three years, studying Islam under traditional teachers. Dr. Timothy was a research fellow at Oxford University. He went on to reside for three years in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia where he administered a commercial translation office. After he embraced Islam, he changed name to Abdul-Hakim Murad.

But what made such a brilliant person embrace Islam? The reasons are summarized in the following paragraphs.

In a tender age of his life, Timothy had embarked on a quest for true religion. And he knew the fact that the clergy did not believe in the Doctrine of Trinity. He was aware that some prominent figures and best minds who lived on this earth were Unitarians. (i.e. People who discarded Trinity and believed in one God.) Timothy was happy to be a Unitarian Christian, sharing the same Unitarian beliefs with Milton, the greatest English poet, John Locke, Isaac Newton, and Charles Dickens among others. His honest reading of the Old Testament made him discard the Trinitarian God and adopt a Unitarian God. And of course the words "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" [Deuteronomy 6:4] appear comprehensible regardless whether they are engraved on stone or printed on paper. The growing acknowledgement of ancient monotheistic faiths (including Islam) by European theologians was also another thing that contributed to his reversion process. On ABC program, John Cleary was interviewing Timothy Winter on the reasons for adopting Islam as a religion. "Which moved you away from Christianity. What then recommends Islam to you?" Cleary asked. "My capacity for faith," Winter replied, "in abstract doctrines is rather limited. I'm very much a child of my time in that, and I could never really take the leap of faith required to subscribe to the indispensable Christian doctrines of Trinity, vicarious atonement."

His zeal for literature on religion was another factor that enlightened Timothy Winter to Islam. Through reading books, Timothy became aware of the Biblical corruptions which ordinary churchgoers are not informed of. The books he read included The *Myth of God Incarnate* and Life *of Mohammed* by Maxime Rodinson. Timothy admits that he was greatly affected by the story of

Muhammad found in Rodinson's book. His "Nonconformity" principle of life enabled him become a happy and perfect stranger in the waves of Christianity mythologies. For instance, he couldn't stomach the doctrine of Atonement, calling this kind of religion 'blackmail', while shocked by the existence of a God who couldn't forgive directly. Other writings that impacted him included the words of the British author Ruqaiyyah Maqsood in *The Mysteries of Jesus: a Muslim study of the origins and doctrines of the Christian church*. In the book, Maqsood unveiled a completely different God, a loving God: "God does not need a sacrifice in order to forgive anyone. The split-second of turning from Christianity to Islam is the realisation of the truth of the parable of the Prodigal Son."

The other reason which brought Timothy to Islam was the reading of the Qur'an. The "compare and contrast" exercise between the Bible and Qur'an, forced Timothy to conclude: "Much of the Bible comprised stories whose purpose seemed ambiguous or even absent, punctuated by occasional flashes of pure light; the Koran was giving me the light alone." In the *Sunday Nights* interview with John Cleary on how he was influenced into Islam, Timothy had to highlight the impact of Qur'an:

> It (Islam) also has wonderful sounds as well, and the key to Islamic tonality and melody is actually the formal recitation of the Holy Qu'ran. I used to walk down a little street when I was living in Cairo in the early morning when the shopkeepers were putting out their wares, and I counted 38 shopkeepers who actually were listening to the 24-hour a day, wall-to-wall Qu'ran radio station, which sort of invested the mundanity of their lives with the fragrance of the absolute. That's certainly my favourite sound, it was one of the things that magnetised me and brought me towards Islam, and it is the greatest of the Islamic art, the naked, unadorned, projection of the human voice into some great dome of a sacred space; that still moves me more than any other sound.

Moreover, Timothy was attracted by what he calls "Islam's miraculous steadiness." That is to say that the core doctrines and practices of Islam are miraculously intact. He writes:

> In a mosque, one experiences not a hankering after banality, but a ritual inherited from a great age of faith, a Rock of Ages, into which one can submerge and be annihilated as one seeks for God. It may be said that no other religion practices as its founder did; no other religion is so liturgically united both geographically and to its sainted past.

On the other hand, he found in Christianity, religious doctrines and practices "have been 'updated' by men manifestly unworthy of the task, provoking division and rancour, often leaving congregations with shallow performances in the place of ancient beauty." Such updates were responsible for distorting the beauty and truth of the religion.

Above all, the important reason for his reversion is his supplication to the distinctly one and only God. Timothy was confident that God was answering his prayer for guidance.

In the interview, John Cleary asked this fundamental question regarding Timothy's life as a Muslim: "What for you is the clear light of Islam, the thing that shines for you, that recommends it to you as a path that your life should honour?" The response was a summary of the beauty of Islam as experienced by Timothy Winter.

A simple definition of one God, ultimate reality is ultimately single, unconfused, uncomplicated, undifferentiated. That seems to me the clearest explanation for the otherwise intolerable mystery of human existence, and the diversity and richness and beauty of the world. And then a wonderful range of forms of meditation and worship by which one approaches and adores that one ultimate reality. One of the richnesses of Islam for me is that the core liturgy, the core practices of worship and of fasting and of charity, *are the same everywhere*, and have never changed. No well-meaning, liberal, woolly-minded reformers have said Let's do mosque worship in a slightly different way. Let's bring in the guitars and the trendy Imam with the winkle-picker boots and the jeans, trying to sing along with the Prophet, and update it. I go into a mosque and I know exactly what I'm going to get, a beautiful, unchanged, perfect ritual from a great age of faith, and I find that to be a unique privilege, one of the great things of being a Muslim for me, is that our core practices don't change, and I think probably never will change. And then also the third thing is belongingness to the Abrahamic tradition. I don't experience it as an Englishman, as something foreign. Superficially, I suppose it's different, but at heart it's part of the Judaeo-Christian scriptural, Middle Eastern family of faiths. I still love Jesus and Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Isaac, Ishmael, they're all revered in the Qu'ran, they're the great figures of my early childhood, and I still revere them to this day. So I don't feel it's an alienation.

He is currently a University Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, England, and Director of Studies in Theology at Wolfson College. Besides being the Imam of the Cambridge Mosque, Sheikh Murad is also the Secretary of the *Muslim Academic Trust* (London) and Director of the *Sunna Project* at the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies at Cambridge University, which issues the first-ever scholarly Arabic editions of the major *Hadith* collections.

He has translated al Bayhaqi's *"Seventy-Seven Branches of Faith"* into English. He has also authored many articles about Islam and Muslims. Some of his books include:

► *Mary the Blessed Virgin of Islam* by T. J. Winter
► *British Muslim Identity: Past, Problems, Prospects* by T. J. Winter
► *Unveiling Islam* by T. J. Winter (Translator), Robert Du Pasquier
► *The Marvels of the Heart : Al-Ghazali's Science of the Spirit* by T. J. Winter
► *Understanding Islam and the Muslims: The Muslim Family, & Islam and World Peace* by T.J. Winter, John Alden Williams [Paperback: 96 pages]
► *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife : Kitab Dhikr Al-Mawt Wa-Ma Badahu Book Xl of the Revival of the Religious Sciences, Ihya Ulum Al-Din* by T. J. Winter(Introduction by), T. J. Winter (Translator), *Ghazzali*

Winter appears frequently on BBC Radio and writes occasionally for a number of publications, including *The Independent*; *Q-News International*, Britain's premier Muslim Magazine; and

Seasons, the semi academic journal of Zaytuna Institute. Timothy Winter is quoted to have said:

> . . . Despite its origins in 7th century Arabia, it (Islam) works everywhere, and this is itself a sign of its miraculous and divine origin . . . Islam, once we have become familiar with it, and settled into it comfortably, is the most suitable faith for the British. Its values are our values. Its moderate, undemonstrative style of piety, still waters running deep; its insistence on modesty and a certain reserve, and its insistence on common sense and on pragmatism, combine to furnish the most natural and easy religious option for our people . . . Islam is the true consanguinity of believers in the One True God, the common bond of those who seek to remain focused on the divine Source of our being in this diffuse, ignorant and tragic age. But it is generous and inclusive. It allows us to celebrate our particularity, the genius of our heritage; within, rather than in tension with, the greater and more lasting fellowship of faith.

". . . Despite its origins in 7th century Arabia, it (Islam) works everywhere, and this is itself a sign of its miraculous and divine origin . . . Islam . . . is the most suitable faith for the British. Its values are our values."

Among the Lectures Dr. T.J. Winter has delivered are:

►The Five Pillars of Islam
►Scriptural Links Between Judaism, Christianity and Islam
►Muslim-Christian Views of One Another
►The Muslim Influence on Europe and the West
►Reliance on Allah: The Cure For An ►Ummah in Crisis
►The Trinity - a Muslim Perspective

The lectures can be ordered through:
< http://www.meccacentric.com/hakim_murad.html>

Dr. Timothy J. Winter lives with his wife and children in Cambridge, UK.

Dr. T.J. Winter (left) with Doctor Muhammad Tahir ul Qadri among other Muslim personalities.

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[**References:** Winter, Tim. "Feature Interview: Tim Winter (aka Abdul Hakim Murad)." By John Cleary Sunday Nights ABC. 18 April 2004. <http://www.abc.net.au/sundaynights/stories/s1237986.htm>; Murad, Abdal-Hakim. "Quicunque Vult, or, A teenage journey to Islam." masud.co.uk Oct. 2008. <http://masud.co.uk/ISLAM/ahm/Quicunque-Vult-or-A-teenage-journey-to-Islam.htm>; http://www.hakimquick.com/an-interview-on-uthman-dan-fodio>; < http://www.welcome-back.org/profile/winter.shtml> Murad, Abdal Hakim. "BBC R3 Interview with Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad" by Joan Bakewell. BBC Radio 3. 2 Jan. 2009. 8:45pm.]

Rosalyn Rushbrook

"Like so many other people who have converted to Islam, I have found that it answers so many of the things I used to question."

~ Rosalyn Rushbrook

Rosalyn Rushbrook is a British author now known as Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood. She was educated at Sydenham High School, gained her honours degree in Christian Theology at the University of Hull in 1963 and Post Graduate Teaching Certificate in 1964, with distinctions in theory and practice. She was for 32 years the head of religious studies at various UK schools before retiring in 1996, to concentrate on writing and lecturing. The 1948 born Rosalyn Rushbrook grew up a devout Protestant Christian, having a deeply religious Christian background but reverted to Islam in 1986. Already established by then as an author of books on Christian and educational topics, she has since devoted her time to writing on Islam and propagating Islamic faith to both Christian and Muslim audiences. She was invited by Hodder Headlines to write a book on Islam for the World Faiths section of the famous *Teach Yourself* series, now in its third edition and a best-seller. Her most well-known and admired book is *The Muslim Marriage Guide.* She has also created a course enabling students to study Islam for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), consisting of her textbook *'Islam'* published by Heinemann Press. The textbook has been used widely in UK schools for over 20 years. She has authored more than forty books on Islam and other subjects and has also written some advisory pamphlets, brochures, reviews and numerous articles. Some of her books include:

". . . there came a time when I was in a Church service of Holy Communion, and I realised that I simply could no longer stand up and recite the Christian creed with any conviction."

- *Need to Know? Islam* [192 pages]
- *A Muslim Study of the Origins of the Christian Church*
- *Thinking About God* [140 pages]
- *The Separated Ones: Jesus, the Pharisees and Islam* [194 pages]
- *What Every Christian Should Know About Islam* [154 pages]
- *The Mysteries of Jesus (A Muslim Examination of the Origins of the Christian Church)* [304 pages + 88 colour plates]
- *The Problem of Evil*
- *The Sign of the Gnat*
- *Teach Yourself: Islam* [332 pages]
- *Examining Religions: Islam* [160 pages]
- *Readings in Cross-Cultural Dawah*

- ▶ *Fingerprints* [26 pages]
- ▶ *Islam: A Dictionary* [117 pages]
- ▶ *A Basic Dictionary of Islam* [240 pages]
- ▶ *Sacred Texts: The Qur'an'*
- ▶ *The Beautiful Commands of Allah*
- ▶ *The Beautiful Promises of Allah*
- ▶ *The Muslim Marriage Guide* [141 pages]
- ▶ *The Muslim Prayer Encyclopedia* [328 pages]
- ▶ *After Death, Life* [240 pages]
- ▶ *Living Islam - treading the path of the ideal* [312 pages]
- ▶ *For Heaven's Sake* [85 pages]
- ▶ *Living With Teenagers* [143 pages]
- ▶ *Muslim Teenagers Coping* [118 pages]
- ▶ *Let's Find Out About - Islamic Mosques* [33 pages]
- ▶ *Studies in Islam - Parts One and Two –*
- ▶ *A Story at 'Id'*
- ▶ *The Beloved Prophet* [60 pages]
- ▶ *GCSE Islam – the Do-it-Yourself Guide*
- ▶ *Islam: A Dictionary* [117 pages]
- ▶ *Moral Issues in Six Religions* [242 pages]
- ▶ *Petra: A Traveler's* Guide [236 pages]
- ▶ *Islam: Beliefs and Teachings*
- ▶ *The Beautiful Promises of Allah* [200 pages]
- ▶ *The Beautiful Commands of Allah* [92 pages]
- ▶ *'Aishah' - A study of her age at the time of her marriage*
- ▶ *Where Did I Go Wrong?* [Paperback: 96 pages]

Maybe, we should bury our prejudices and read some if not all of her books. Ruqaiyyah's main aims have been to promote knowledge of Islam to non-Muslims and to counter Islamic extremism. She regularly addresses school and church groups, explaining Islam, with a keen interest in presenting Islam as a *world* faith. She has lectured in many countries, including the USA, Canada, Singapore, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Ireland, and at many major universities in the UK, including Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, and the School of Oriental and Arabic Studies in London. She tutored at the Dar al-Islam summer school at Abiquiu, New Mexico, in 1998, and has lectured at many conferences around the world. Moreover, Ruqaiyyah has served several times as a Cyber Counsellor for the website *www.islamonline.net*. Her interests include inter-faith dialogue, and the campaign against various abuses of Muslim women. She has two kids Daniel born 1968, and Frances, born 1969.

Ruqaiyyah travelled this path in her own search for the truth and an intellectual honesty that was also compatible with the study of the Christian scriptures (both Old and New Testaments). While studying intensely about the life of Jesus in the light of Christianity, she began to question her own faith. Her background knowledge of Christian scriptures, her professional studies as a theologian, and most significantly, the life and teachings of Prophet Jesus himself made her see the light in Islam and in 1986 she embraced the religion.

A glimpse of what made Rosalyn Rushbrook revert to Islam is retrieved from the last chapter of her book *"What Every Christian Should Know About Islam"*, where she writes:

> **My mother's question –why did my daughter, who I have always believed to be intelligent and in her right mind, choose to become one of these Muslims?**
>
> Dear reader, I hope that if you have read my book through, I do not need to add anything to what I have already said. Like so many other people who have converted to Islam, I have found that it answers so many of the things I used to question, whether in the realm of theology or morality and ethics. I have shared with so many other converts, the feeling of finding my place at last, of coming home . . . . I also believe that one of the most important qualities in any person is *honesty*, integrity in one's personal life, and also in following what one believes to be true. It is for that reason, therefore, that I chose to become 'one of those Muslims' – not because I suddenly didn't like Jesus any more, or that I suddenly became 'political' and wanted to become a terrorist, or that I suddenly decided I must be completely subservient to some man or other. These things have nothing to do with Islam. I became Muslim because I was, in a small way, a theologian – and because when I discovered the real teachings of Islam, I believed them to be right. I didn't want to cause trouble, or upset my family, or offend anybody – but there came a time when I was in a Church service of Holy Communion, and I realised that I simply could no longer stand up and recite the Christian creed with any conviction.
>
> I rarely discuss theology with my parents. It embarrasses and irritates them. My mother staunchly resists any notion of being 'taken over', and is pacified when I point out that the Qur'an advises us to leave others alone, apart from setting our examples as best we can, providing answers when asked, and preaching what we believe when called upon to do so, or whenever we have a suitable opportunity. Surah 109 reads:
>
> *'Say: O you who do not believe, I do not worship that which you worship, and you will not worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which you have always been used to worship, nor will you worship what I worship. To you be your way, and to me be mine.'* [47]

In March 2004, when the Queen of England honoured a selection of Women of Achievement, Ruqaiyyah was one of the 100 *'unsung inspirational heroines'* chosen for the *Daily Mail's Real Women of Achievement*, one of only 7 chosen in the category of Religion. Other awards she has won include Allama Iqbal Award for Creative Thought in Islam.

47. Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood. What Every Christian Should Know About Islam. Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2000.pp. 140-143.

Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood with the former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair

In an interview with Roy Watkins, she said:

> I would say that the ethical teaching centred on love of God and the service of humanity is what was taught by all the other prophets, including, of course, Muhammad - peace be upon all of them. The mystery-cult aspect was not only taught by St Paul, of course - the Trinities of Creator-Father, Virgin-Mother and Dying-and-Rising- Saviour-Son were commonplace all over the ancient world - the closest to Christianity possible being the Mithraic version. Atonement theology is based on the idea that Almighty God has got Himself into a predicament from which He cannot extract Himself without incarnating as a human being and sacrificing Himself, with the co-doctrine that human beings have inherited an original sin from which they cannot extricate themselves without this Divine Process. To a Jew or a Muslim, this is blasphemy, and frankly, nonsense. Monotheism always teaches that God's power is Absolute and both Judaism and Islam teach that His forgiveness and compassion is freely available for all who turn to Him, without any need of sacrifice of any description. Surely, that is what Jesus taught too?

When Roy Watkins asked about the mission of Jesus himself and monotheism, she responded saying:

> Indeed, I firmly believe that ethical monotheism is the true universal world-faith, and do not find it at all surprising that it draws converts wherever it manifests. I can only believe that there is One God, one Almighty, and that 'He' is the same God that has inspired all the Messengers. The fact that different types of followers have understood things differently, and enact different rituals, and have different emphases in no way detracts from this. I believe the mission of Jesus to have been

exactly the same as the mission to Muhammad, and all the prophets that came before him - to bring people to awareness of the reality of God, and to find love and peace and fulfilment in that knowledge, and to work towards every possible care for and improvement of the environment in which they have been born, by God's will.

Ruqaiyah Waris says:

True believers have nothing to fear in the most gloomy scenes of life; they have nothing to fear in the valley of death; they have nothing to fear in the grave; they have nothing to fear in the world beyond, for God is with them. They do not go anywhere alone, for God is the Companion, the Guide.

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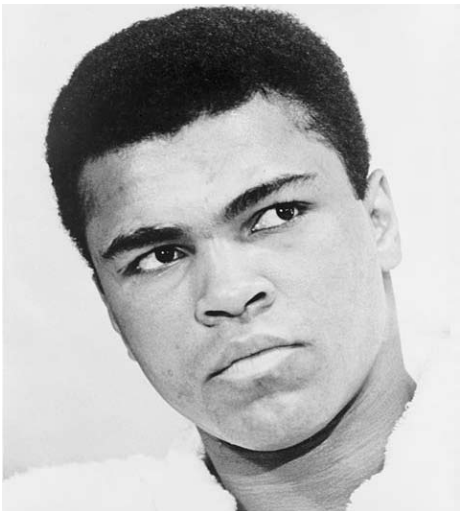
References: Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah Waris. What Every Christian Should Know About Islam. Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2000. pp. 140-144; "Religion and Ethics-Biographies." bbc.co.uk 18 Dec. 2008. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/biographies.shtml>; Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah Waris. "A week in the life of Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood." By Anfal Saqib Emel Magazine March/April 2004. Rushbrook, Rosalyn. Where Did I Go Wrong? (Paperback: 96 pages); Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah "Interview." By Sumayyah Meehan. Muslim Media Network 4 Oct. 2007; Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah "The Mysteries of Jesus." By Roy Watkins. ruqaiyyah.karoo.net <,http://www.ruqaiyyah.karoo.net/>]

Muhammad Ali

"It's just a job. Grass grows, birds fly, waves pound the sand. I beat people up."

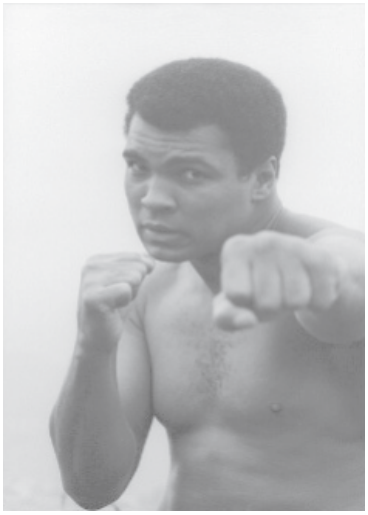
~ Mohammad Ali (1977)



"If you even dream of beating me you'd better wake up and apologize."

~ Mohammad Ali

He was born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. on January 17, 1942 in Kentucky. After beating Sonny Liston to capture the world heavyweight championship in 1964, Clay announced that he had accepted the teachings of a religion known as the *Nation of Islam*, a deviant sect of Islam. He changed his name to Muhammad Ali. He even said: "Muhammad Ali, a free name, it means beloved of God and I insist people use it when speaking to me and of me." Thereafter, he became a lightning rod for dissent throughout America and refused induction into the US



Army during the height of the war in Vietnam. Muhammad Ali defied the US government and alienated mainstream America. A Black Muslim and a conscientious objector who will ever be remembered as a hero of the antiwar movement after he was barred from participating in sports for 3 1/2 years because he refused to fight in Vietnam. Explaining why he refused induction into the Army he says:

> Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on Brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No I'm not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end. I have been warned that to take such a stand would cost me millions of dollars. But I have said it once and I will say it again. The real enemy of my people is here. I will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality . . . . If I thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to 22 million of my people they wouldn't have to draft me, I'd join tomorrow. I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I'll go to jail, so what? We've been in jail for 400 years.

Of course he had to pay the price. He was convicted of refusing induction into the U.S. armed forces and sentenced to five years in prison although he remained free on bail. His passport was confiscated, the World Boxing Association stripped him of the heavyweight title and he was suspended from fighting . . . at the end he spent three-and-a-half years of inactivity in the prime of his athletic life because he stood up for his principles. Ali's comment to *Sports Illustrated* at these moments of tribulations was, "I'm giving up my title, my wealth, may be my future. Many great men have been tested for their religious beliefs. If I pass this test, I'll come out stronger than ever."

"I'm giving up my title, my wealth, maybe my future. Many great men have been tested for their religious beliefs. If I pass this test, I'll come out stronger than ever."

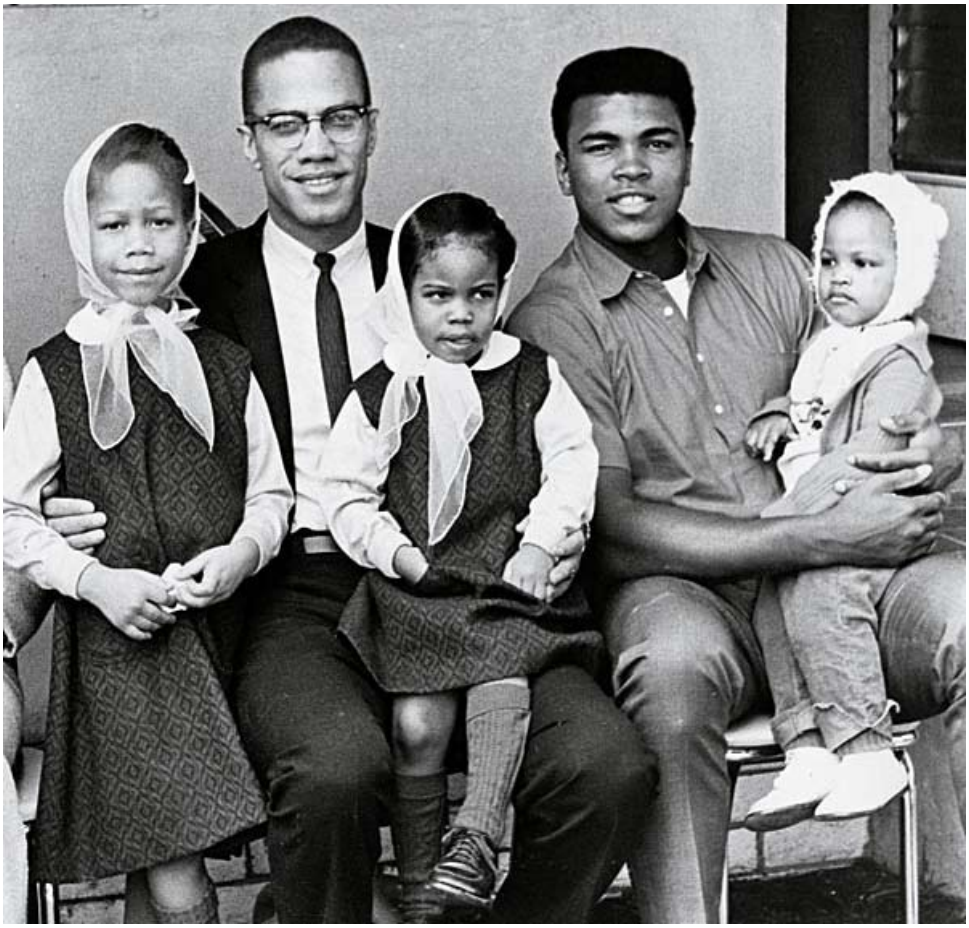
His refusal to fight in Vietnam was front-page news all over the world, and as Anti-war activist Daniel Berrigan puts it:

> It was a major boost to an antiwar movement . . . . During his exile, Ali explained saying: "I'm expected to go overseas to help free people in South Vietnam and at the same time my people here are being brutalized, hell no! I would like to say to those of you who think I have lost so much, I have gained everything. I have peace of heart; I have a clear, free conscience. And I am proud. I wake up happy, I go to bed happy, and if I go to jail I'll go to jail happy.

In the mid-1970s, he began to study the Qur'an seriously and in 1975, Muhammad Ali converted to Sunni Islam, the correct view of Islam. His earlier adherence to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad (such as white people are "devils" and there is no heaven or hell) were replaced by a spiritual

embrace of all people and preparation for his own afterlife. In 1984 Ali spoke out publicly against the separatist doctrine of Louis Farrakhan, declaring, “What he teaches is not at all what we believe in. He represents the time of our struggle in the dark and a time of confusion in us, and we don’t want to be associated with that at all.”

Malcolm X had an impact on the life of the three-time heavyweight champion boxer. Muhammad Ali told Young Muslim that Malcolm X “. . . was a good speaker. He was fearless. He helped me to come to Islam.” In fact, Muhammad Ali sought guidance and counsel from Malcolm X, whom he met several times. Just before Muhammad Ali’s fight with Liston, *who was* widely regarded as the *most intimidating*, powerful fighter of *his era*, Malcolm X advised Ali to remember David and Goliath.



Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali with their kids

Speaking to the daily *'Al-Madinah'*, Jeddah, 15 July, 1989, he said:

> I have had many nice moments in my life. But the feelings I had while standing on Mount Arafat on the day of Hajj (Muslims' pilgrimage), was the most unique. I felt exalted by the indescribable spiritual atmosphere there as over a million and a half pilgrims invoked God to forgive them of their sins and bestow on them His choicest blessings. It was an exhilarating experience to see people belonging to different colors, races and nationalities, kings, heads of states and ordinary men from very poor countries all clad in two simple white sheets praying to God without any sense of either pride or inferiority. It was a practical manifestation of the concept of equality in Islam.

Some of Muhammad Ali's achievements include winning a gold medal at the 1960 Olympics in Rome; six Kentucky Golden Gloves titles; National Golden Gloves titles, 1959-60; In 1996, he was selected to light the ceremonial flame at the Summer Olympics in Atlanta; he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1990; he won his three titles by defeating Sonny Liston (1964), George Foreman (1974) and Leon Spinks (1978) *thus becoming the only professional boxer to win the heavyweight championship three times.* Ali's managers sometimes refer to him as GOAT - the Greatest Of All Time; in 1999, Ali was crowned "Sportsman of the Century" by *Sports Illustrated* and *the BBC*; Ali had also played the role of diplomat, attempting to secure the release of four kidnapped Americans in Lebanon in 1985; he was the spokesperson for *Operation USA* in Rwanda in 1996; he formed the Muhammad Ali Community and Economic Development Corporation in Chicago, Illinois. Other awards Ali received include the Jim Thorpe Pro Sports Award, Lifetime Achievement, 1992; the Essence Award, 1997; Arthur Ashe Award for Courage to All, ESPN (Espy) Award, 1997; Service to America Leadership Award, National Association of Broadcasters Foundation, 2001.

Muhammad Ali has been quoted saying: "I believe in the religion of Islam. I believe in Allah and peace." And he had also said: "I am America. I am the part you won't recognize. But get used to me. Black, confident, cocky; my name, not yours; my religion, not yours; my goals, my own; get used to me."

Some of his notable quotations include:

"A rooster crows only when it sees the light. Put him in the dark and he'll never crow. I have seen the light and I'm crowing."

▫▫▫

"A man who views the world the same at fifty as he did at twenty has wasted thirty years of his life."

▫▫▫

"Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

▫▫▫

"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."

▫▫▫

"Prejudice comes from being in the dark; sunlight disinfects it."

▫▫▫

"I hated every minute of training, but I said, "Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion."

▫▫▫

"I'm the most recognized and loved man that ever lived cuz there weren't no satellites when Jesus and Moses were around, so people far away in the villages didn't know about them."

▫▫▫

"If they can make penicillin out of mouldy bread, they can sure make something out of you."

▫▫▫

"It's not bragging if you can back it up."

▫▫▫

"Silence is golden when you can't think of a good answer."

▫▫▫

"Superman don't need no seat belt."

▫▫▫

"It's hard to be humble, when you're as great as I."

▫▫▫

"To be a great champion you must believe you are the best. If you're not, pretend you are."

▫▫▫

"I never thought of losing, but now that it's happened, the only thing is to do it right. That's my obligation to all the people who believe in me. We all have to take defeats in life." --Statement after losing his first fight to Ken Norton, March 31, 1973

▫▫▫

"God gave me this illness to remind me that I'm not number One; He is." – (Mohamed Ali is now battling against Parkinson's disease. He has been suffering from the disease since 1984.)

▫▫▫

"I never ask "Why me?" for no condition. There's so much good, (I've) been so blessed. God tries you. Some things are good. Some things are bad. All of them are trials."

▫▫▫

"Don't count the days, make the days count."

▫▫▫

"I'm the best. I just haven't played yet."

▫▫▫

In December 2004, *Time*'s interviewer hurled a question about Ali's routine to which he responded saying:

> I travel a lot. I enjoy meeting my fans. No matter where I am, prayer, study and reflection are a large part of my life. I am the same person I always was. I just do everything a little slower and a lot quieter. But one thing that hasn't changed is that I am still pretty.

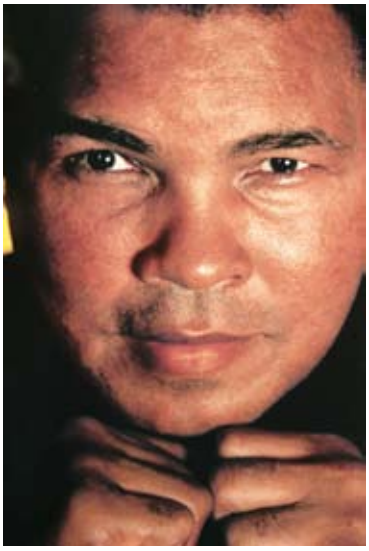
Although its authenticity need to be verified but the story goes that Ali had visited the remains of the World Trade Center in New York City after the September 11, 2001 attacks and was asked by reporters how he felt about having the same religion as of those who perpetrated the attacks. He then allegedly responded with the question, "How do you feel about Hitler sharing yours?"

In an interview with the *Young Muslim* in the presence of Lonnie Ali, they had asked Muhammad Ali: "I heard that before you became Muslim, you never used to read and thought you couldn't read very well?" And Lonnie Ali responded in his behalf saying:

> Muhammad may have been dyslexic as a boy. He never focused on the mechanics of reading, but now he can spend hours a day reading. When he reads the Qur'an, he'll copy out passages that really touch him. He reads Islamic books, research books, particularly those that point out contradictions in the Bible. He checks them out thoroughly, to find out if there's any bias.

At a certain point, Muhammad Ali showed *Young Muslim* a booklet called *Bible Contradictions*. Another question went like: "You won the world heavyweight championship 3 times and successfully defended it 19 times. What are your goals now?" Muhammad Ali replied: "Propagating Islam. And that's all." In a different interview by *Beliefnet* Senior Editor Deborah Caldwell who talked with Hana Ali about her relationship with her father, she said:

> . . . My father is very spiritual-more spiritual now than he is religious. It was important for him to be very religious and take the stands he did in earlier years. It was a different time. He still tries to convert people to Islam, but it's not the same. His health and his spirituality have changed, and it's not so much about being religious, but about going out and making people happy, doing charity, and supporting people and causes.



When *Young Muslim* asked what his greatest achievement was, Muhammad said, "Joining Islam." *Young Muslim* went further and asked: "If you could go back and change anything, what would that be?" Muhammad proudly answered saying: "I would become a Muslim at the age of ten." In the interview, they asked about Muhammad Ali's favorite book? And as you could guess the answer was: "That's a dumb question! It has to be The Qur'an."

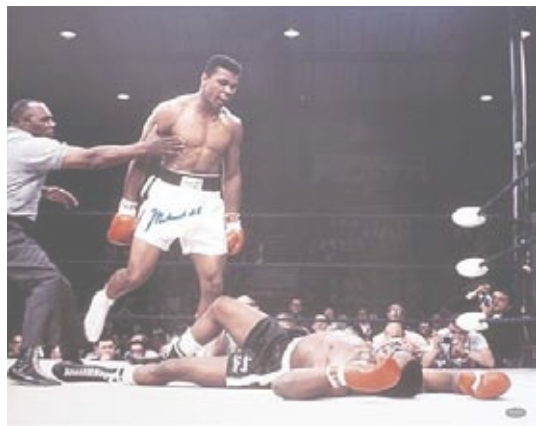
Muhammad Ali currently lives in Michigan with his fourth wife, Yolanda Williams. Muhammad Ali has nine children: Rasheedah, Jamilah, Maryam, Miya, Khalilah, Hana, Laila, Muhammad Jr. and Asaad.

Muhammad Ali in *salah* (prayer). This is how Muslims pray, imitating Jesus at The Garden of Gethsemane. "He (Jesus) went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed . . . ." [Matthew 26:39]. All men of God pray like this even the Biblical Joshua, "And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped . . . ." [Joshua 5:14]

When Muhammad decided to retire from boxing, his comment was: "I'm retiring because there are more pleasant things to do than beat up people."

In closing, we will provide the response Muhammad gave George Plimpton, to the question at the end of an interview: "What would you like people to think about you when you've gone?"

> I'd like for them to say he took a few cups of love, he took one tablespoon of patience, one tablespoon, teaspoon of generosity, one pint of kindness. He took one quart of laughter, one pinch of concern, and then, he mix(ed) willingness with happiness, he added lots of faith, and he stired it up well, then he spreads it over his span of a lifetime, and he served it to each and every deserving person he met.



Muhammad Ali in action.

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Dr. Lisa Zaynab Killinger

Dr. Lisa Zaynab Killinger is a 1983 graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic, Davenport, Iowa and in 1994 she joined the Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research as a research instructor. She has presented her research at numerous interdisciplinary conferences including the American Society on Aging, the Interdisciplinary Healthcare Team Conference, the National Council on Aging and the American Public Health Association (APHA).

In 1999, Dr. Killinger was elected as the Secretary to the Chiropractic Health Care Section of the APHA (the second largest patient advocacy organization in the US). She also currently works as a consultant for the US Government's Health Resources and Services Administration's Chiropractic Program. She has been the Department Chair of Diagnosis and Radiology at Palmer College of Chiropractic, and has authored and co-authored 4 book chapters and 27 papers in peer-reviewed professional journals and has made over 100 presentations at scientific and educational conferences.

She has been the Secretary of the Muslim Community of the Quad Cities, her local mosque. Lisa Zaynab served as the Secretary for QCAHC (The Quad City Anti-Hate Coalition), an organization that works to foster a community that affirms the values of justice and compassion, and rejects hate. She currently serves as President of the Quad Cities World Affairs Council; an organization dedicated to enhancing international awareness through educational and cultural activities. Dr. Killinger has visited the Middle East and Indo-Pakistani subcontinent, as well as England and North America. Besides being the AMPAL's (Americans and Palestinians for Peace) Board of

Directors, she is also an advisory board member of ABCO (The American Board of Chiropractic Orthopedics) a voluntary, non-profit, professional credentialing board that certifies qualified chiropractic physicians and practitioners engaged in the field of chiropractic medicine who have met the professional knowledge standards established by the Board. Furthermore Lisa is an activist for Progressive Action for the Common Good.

She lectures extensively on comparative religions, women's issues, and world peace, often serving as a liaison between the Muslim community and other community-based organizations. Despite conducting numerous seminars and workshops for her professional and faith communities, her most important contribution is serving as the mother of four children.

"What kind of woman would want to be Muslim . . . they're oppressed!" This unfortunate comment was heard by Lisa Killinger upon her reversion to Islam in 1979 and her response was to prepare a lecture titled. *Women in Islam through Western Eyes* [Duration: 40 min]. Other lectures by Killinger include*; Men Are From Marwa, Women Are From Safa* [Duration: 1 hour, 15 min], *How to Find Your Soulmate the Islamic Way* [Duration: 49 min]. The lectures can be ordered from:

<http://www.meccacentric.com/lisa_killinger.html>

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Dr. Jerald F. Dirks

"By virtue of my seminary training and education, I knew how badly the Bible had been corrupted (and often knew exactly when, where, and why), I had no belief in any triune godhead, and I had no belief in anything more than a metaphorical "sonship" of Jesus, peace be upon him. In short, while I certainly believed in God, I was as strict a monotheist as my Muslim friends."

~ Dr. Jerald F. Dirks

Jerald F. Dirks was born into a Christian family, had a Christian upbringing, had attended church and Sunday school every Sunday as a child, had graduated from a prestigious seminary and was an ordained minister in a large Protestant denomination. Upon graduating from Harvard College in 1971, Dr. Jerald F. Dirks enrolled at the Harvard Divinity School, and obtained from there his Master of Divinity degree in 1974, having been previously ordained into the Deaconate of the United Methodist Church in 1972. He also holds a doctorate in psychology from the University of Denver (USA).

He has published over sixty articles in the field of clinical psychology and over one hundred and fifty articles on Arabian horses. He has traveled extensively in the Middle East and interacted widely with the Muslim communities in the United States.

Thanks to his stock of knowledge about Christianity and his experience in the Christian world which made him make such an eye-opening statement:

> There is some irony in the fact that the supposedly best, brightest, and most idealistic of ministers-to-be are selected for the very best of seminary education, e.g. that offered at that time at the Harvard Divinity School. The irony is that, given such an education, the seminarian is exposed to as much of the actual historical truth as is known about: 1) the formation of the early, "mainstream" church, and how it was shaped by geopolitical considerations; 2) the "original" reading of various Biblical texts, many of which are in sharp contrast to what most Christians read when they pick up their Bible, although gradually some of this information is being incorporated into newer and better translations; 3) the evolution of such concepts as a triune godhead and the "sonship" of Jesus, peace be upon him; 4) the non-religious considerations that underlie many Christian creeds and doctrines; 5) the existence of those early churches and Christian movements which never accepted the concept of a triune godhead, and which never accepted the concept of the divinity of Jesus,

peace be upon him; and 6) etc. (Some of these fruits of my seminary education are recounted in more detail in my recent book, The Cross and the Crescent: An Interfaith Dialogue between Christianity and Islam, Amana Publications, 2001.) As such, it is no real wonder that almost a majority of such seminary graduates leave seminary, not to "fill pulpits", where they would be asked to preach that which they know is not true, but to enter the various counseling professions. Such was also the case for me, as I went on to earn a master's and doctorate in clinical psychology. I continued to call myself a Christian, because that was a needed bit of self-identity, and because I was, after all, an ordained minister, even though my full time job was as a mental health professional. However, my seminary education had taken care of any belief I might have had regarding a triune godhead or the divinity of Jesus, peace be upon him. (Polls regularly reveal that ministers are less likely to believe these and other dogmas of the church than are the laity they serve, with ministers more likely to understand such terms as "son of God" metaphorically, while their parishioners understand it literally.) I thus became a "Christmas and Easter Christian", attending church very sporadically, and then gritting my teeth and biting my tongue as I listened to sermons espousing that which I knew was not the case.

"For those contemplating the acceptance of Islam there may well be sacrifices along the way. In the final analysis, these sacrifices are less important than you presently think. God willing, you will find these sacrifices a very cheap coin to pay for the "goods" you are purchasing."

Despite all, Dr. Jerald remained religious or spiritually oriented while identifying himself as a Christian. He writes:

> I simply knew better than to buy into the man-made dogmas and articles of faith of the organized church, which were so heavily laden with the pagan influences, polytheistic notions, and geo-political considerations of a bygone era.

Dr. Jerald F. Dirks and his wife had been actively involved in doing research on the history of the Arabian horse. In order to secure translations of various Arabic documents, their research brought them into contact with Arab Americans who happened to be Muslims. Dr. Jerald learnt a lot from the constant behavioral example of such practicing Muslims. Furthermore, Jerald was highly impressed by Muslim community compared to his American society which was 'morally bankrupt'. He found that in the Muslim community, marriages were stable, spouses were committed to each other, and honesty, integrity, self-responsibility, and family values were emphasized. He saw that Muslims espouse moral and ethical manner, both in their business world and in their social world.

Another aspect that contributed to the conversion of Dr. Jerald was his personal quest of self-discovery through reading books on Islam. For instance within a month, he had read half a dozen or so books on Islam, including one biography of the Prophet Muhammad. He also read *three different* English translations of the meaning of the Qur'an.

Jerald was struck by a hesitation to adopt Islam albeit his consciousness siding with Islam. In his own words, we could better understand what he went through:

> One's sense of identity, of who one is, is a powerful affirmation of one's own position in the cosmos. In my professional practice, I had occasionally been called upon to treat certain addictive disorders, ranging from smoking, to alcoholism, to drug abuse. As a clinician, I knew that the basic physical addiction had to be overcome to create the initial abstinence. That was the easy part of treatment. As Mark Twain once said: "Quitting smoking is easy; I've done it hundreds of times". However, I also knew that the key to maintaining that abstinence over an extended time period was overcoming the client's psychological addiction, which was heavily grounded in the client's basic sense of identity, i.e. the client identified to himself that he was "a smoker", or that he was "a drinker", etc. The addictive behavior had become part and parcel of the client's basic sense of identity, of the client's basic sense of self. Changing this sense of identity was crucial to the maintenance of the psychotherapeutic "cure". This was the difficult part of treatment. Changing one's basic sense of identity is the most difficult task. One's psyche tends to cling to the old and familiar, which seem more psychologically comfortable and secure than the new and unfamiliar.
>
> On a professional basis, I had the above knowledge, and used it on a daily basis. However, ironically enough, I was not yet ready to apply it to myself, and to the issue of my own hesitation surrounding my religious identity. For 43 years, my religious identity had been neatly labeled as "Christian", however many qualifications I might have added to that term over the years. Giving up that label of personal identity was no easy task. It was part and parcel of how I defined my very being. Given the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that my hesitation served the purpose of insuring that I could keep my familiar religious identity of being a Christian, although a Christian who believed like a Muslim believed.
>
> It was now the very end of December, and my wife and I were filling out our application forms for U.S. passports, so that a proposed Middle Eastern journey could become a reality. One of the questions had to do with religious affiliation. I didn't even think about it, and automatically fell back on the old and familiar, as I penned in "Christian". It was easy, it was familiar, and it was comfortable.
>
> However, that comfort was momentarily disrupted when my wife asked me how I had answered the question on religious identity on the application form. I immediately replied, "Christian", and chuckled audibly. Now, one of Freud's contributions to the understanding of the human psyche was his realization that laughter is often a release of psychological tension. However wrong Freud may have been in many aspects of his theory of psychosexual development, his insights into laughter were quite on target. I had laughed! What was this psychological tension that I had need to release through the medium of laughter?
>
> I then hurriedly went on to offer my wife a brief affirmation that I was a Christian, not a Muslim. In response to which, she politely informed me that she was merely asking whether I had written "Christian", or "Protestant", or "Methodist". On a professional basis, I knew that a person does not defend himself against an accusation that hasn't been made. (If, in the course of a session of psychotherapy, my client blurted out, "I'm not angry about that", and I hadn't even broached the topic of anger, it was clear that my client was feeling the need to defend himself against a charge

that his own unconscious was making. In short, he really was angry, but he wasn't ready to admit it or to deal with it.) If my wife hadn't made the accusation, i.e. "you are a Muslim", then the accusation had to have come from my own unconscious, as I was the only other person present. I was aware of this, but still I hesitated. The religious label that had been stuck to my sense of identity for 43 years was not going to come off easily.

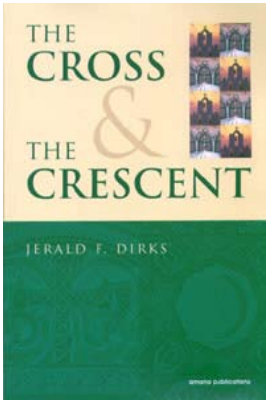
However, in March of 1993, he became a Muslim. His wife of 33 years also became a Muslim about that same time. Some of Dr. Jerald's reasons for conversion may be summarized as:

►His seminary education enabled him see the falsehood of a triune godhead (i.e. he couldn't stomach the polytheism)
►The existence of early churches and Christian movements which never accepted the concept of a triune godhead, and which never accepted the concept of the divinity of Jesus.
►He knew quite well how the Bible had been corrupted.
►The "original" reading of various Biblical texts, many of which are in sharp contrast to what most Christians read when they pick up their Bible.
►The non-religious considerations that underlie many Christian creeds and doctrines
►Some seminary graduates who fill pulpits preach that which they know is not true.
►He was deeply impressed by the behavioral examples he had witnessed in the Muslim community.
►He took an initiative to learn Islam from translations of Holy Qur'an and other books on Islam.

Dr. Jerald F. dirks (now Abu Yahya) knows quite clearly that there is a price to pay for any decision people make. He faced the harsh trials for making a journey from the cross to the crescent. He gives the following advice to the converts-to-be:

There are sacrifices to be made in being a Muslim in America. For that matter, there are sacrifices to be made in being a Muslim anywhere. However, those sacrifices may be more acutely felt in America, especially among American converts. Some of those sacrifices are very predictable, and include altered dress and abstinence from alcohol, pork, and the taking of interest on one's money. Some of those sacrifices are less predictable. For example, one Christian family, with whom we were close friends, informed us that they could no longer associate with us, as they could not associate with anyone "who does not take Jesus Christ as his personal savior". In addition, quite a few of my professional colleagues altered their manner of relating to me. Whether it was coincidence or not, my professional referral base dwindled, and there was almost a 30% drop in income as a result. Some of these less predictable sacrifices were hard to accept, although the sacrifices were a small price to pay for what was received in return.

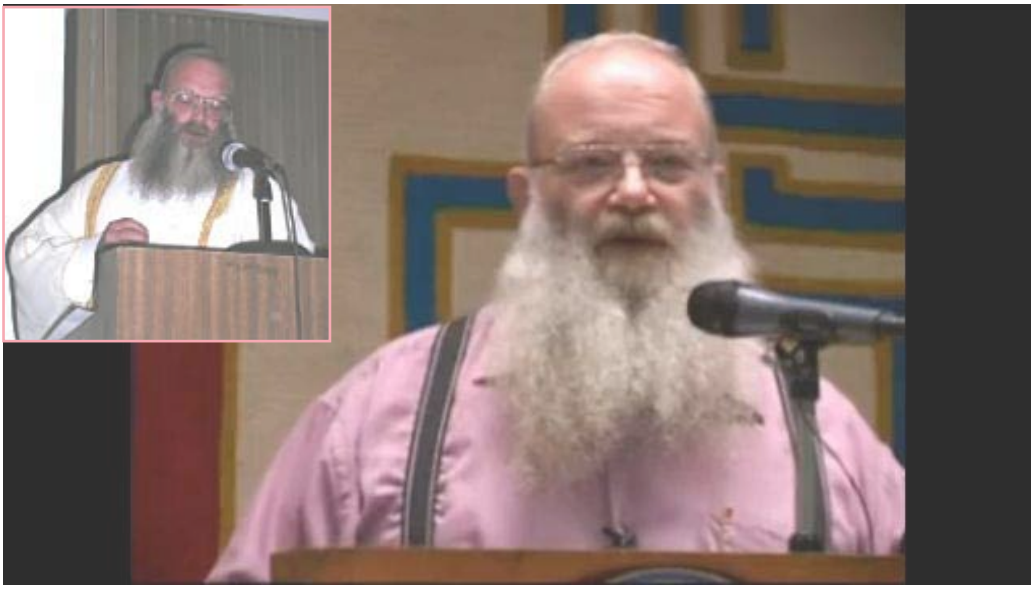
For those contemplating the acceptance of Islam and the surrendering of oneself to Allah—glorified and exalted is He, there may well be sacrifices along the way. Many of these sacrifices are easily predicted, while others may be rather surprising and unexpected. There is no denying the existence of these sacrifices, and I don't intend to sugar coat that pill for you. Nonetheless, don't be overly troubled by these sacrifices. In the final analysis, these sacrifices are less important than you presently think. Allah willing, you will find these sacrifices a very cheap coin to pay for the "goods" you are purchasing.



He has written a book titled *The Cross & The Crescent.* Amana Publications, 2001. [Paperback: 272] in which he envisioned:

> In writing this book, I would like to touch the lives of those Christians who have not been given the knowledge that I have gained both about Islam, from my direct contact with Muslims, and about Christianity from my seminary education. I want to share with those Christians, who are willing to listen, what is so often known by their clergy and church leaders, but seldom finds its way into their knowledge of their own religion. Likewise, I would like to reach out to the Muslims, in order to help them understand the religious commonality that they share with Christians.

Other books by Jerald F. Dirks include *Abraham: the Friend of God.* Amana Publications, 2002. [Paperback: 340]; *The Abrahamic Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, And Islam Similarities & Contrasts.* Amana Publications, 2004, [Paperback: 284]; *Muslims in an American History: A Forgotten Legacy.* Amana Publications *2006.* [Paperback: 400]; *Understanding Islam: A Guide for the Judaeo-Christian Reader.* Amana Publications, 2006. [Paperback: 394]; *Letters to My Elders in Islam.* Amana Publications, 2008. [Paperback: 420].



Dr. Jerald preaching

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Aminah Assilmi

"I explained how Jesus loved them and had died on the cross to save them from their sins."

~ Aminah Assilmi

Assilmi was raised in a white American family of Southern Baptists in Oklahoma. She was a radical feminist and a broadcast journalist.

Her fascinating conversion story started when the university computer mistakenly registered her for a Theatre class, where she would meet Muslim students. She found herself with a mission to accomplish. Trying to proselytize the Arab classmates, she preached to them that *"they would burn in the fires of hell for all eternity, if they did not accept Jesus as their personal savior."* Determined to win converts Assilmi said: "I explained how Jesus loved them and had died on the cross to save them from their sins. All they had to do was accept him into their hearts." When all the preaching didn't work, she decided to study the Qur'an to gain insight into Islam for the purposes of converting Muslims to Christianity. "It was a huge surprise for me," Assilmi said, referring to her experience with the Qur'an. Her mission to convert others led to her own conversion.

Assilmi did an intense study on Islam as she says: "For two years I studied in order to convert Muslims to Christianity". During this time she studied the Qur'an fully, *Sahih Muslim* and fifteen other books on Islam. In fact she re-read the Qur'an. While studying Islam, Assilmi encountered questions and objections which were untied by her college mate Abdul-Aziz Al-Sheik. Realizing the truth in Islam, Assilmi had no choice but to utter in front of Abdul-Aziz and his companions: "I bear witness that there is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger." It was May 21, 1977. She chose the name Amina Assilmi. However, she had vowed not to cover her hair and if her husband takes another wife, she would castrate him. Nonetheless, after a deeper plunge into Islamic knowledge she found herself wearing Hijab. ". . . I even came to be a proponent of polygamy", she added, "I knew that if Allah had allowed it, there had to be something good in it."

". . . I even came to be a proponent of polygamy"

Upon her conversion, Amina lost most of her friends, for she was *'no fun anymore'*. Her 'mental health expert' sister thought that she lost her mind so she attempted to put her in a mental health institution. On hearing that she converted to Islam, her father loaded his double-barrel shotgun and started on his way to kill her. "It is better that she be dead . . . ." he said. The day she started wearing hijab, the award-winning broadcaster in the Denver market, was denied her job. After she openly accepted Islam, she was divorced by her husband. Just because she became a Muslim, she was denied the custody of her two little children whom she loved dearly and whose custody should have rightfully been given to her. In fact, the judge offered her a harsh choice, before giving the formal verdict: either renounce Islam and get custody of the children, or keep Islam and leave the children. What added further to her pain was that according to doctors, she could never

bear another child because of certain complications. However, she decided to retain Islam. Her two dear children – one little boy and one little girl – were taken away from her and given to her ex-husband. The suffering shifted beyond mental to physical as she says, "I've been forced off the road before -- beaten up -- and I've never lifted a hand against anyone." The defining moment came when she tried to cash a cheque at her bank wearing the face veil when a bank security guard drew his gun preparing to shoot if she made any questionable moves.

Despite her family's initial reaction, she remained in touch with them and addressed them with respect and humility. Her life had changed to a better her so that so her family started appreciating her. The invisible force of the beauty of Islam exhibited by Assilmi attracted her family towards Islam. The first to become Muslim was her grandmother who was over 100 years old. Next to become Muslim was her father, the one who wanted to kill her after she became Muslim. Years later, her mother accepted Islam. Her sister who wanted to put her in mental institution accepted Islam as well. Her oldest son, Whittney, upon becoming adult at the age of 21, accepted Islam. Sixteen years after the divorce, her ex-husband also accepted Islam. "Relatives of mine are still becoming Muslim right and left," she said.

Assilmi later married another person, and despite the doctors' verdict that she could never conceive another child, God blessed her with a beautiful boy. She lost her job because of wearing Hijab, but now she is the President of the International Union of Muslim Women. She delivers lectures nationwide and is on high demand.

Amina is proud to be Muslim. She says:

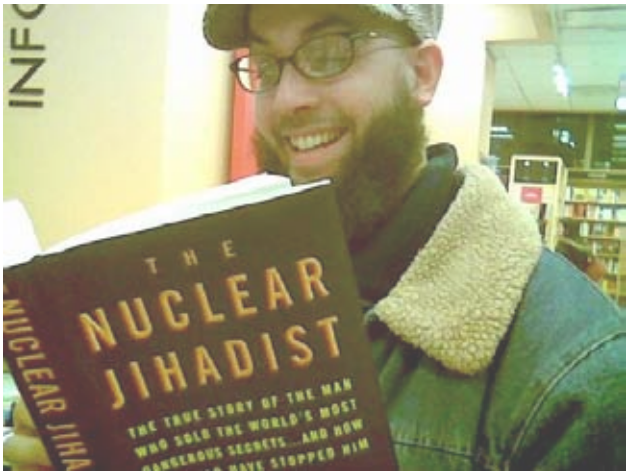
> I am so very glad that I am a Muslim. Islam is my life. Islam is the beat of my heart. Islam is the blood that courses through my veins. Islam is my strength. Islam is my life so wonderful and beautiful. Without Islam I am nothing, and should Allah ever turn His magnificent face from me, I could not survive.

[**References:** "The Introduction and Decision (Testimony of Aminah Assilmi)." thetruereligion.org 22 Nov. 2003. <http://www.thetruereligion.org/aminah.htm>.]

Rabbi Yousef Cohen

"When I opened the Qur'an the first time I could not put it down, ... Every criticism (in the Qur'an) of the Jews was precise but not hateful, it was Allah showing the Jews how to correct ourselves"

~ Rabbi Yousef Cohen



Rabbi Yousef Cohen (born 1971 Brooklyn, USA) was a Jew and one of Satmar's followers - a mystical Jewish movement. His former name is Joseph Cohen. He had lived in the USA but in 1998 he traveled to Israel. Cohen and his family (his wife Lona Cohen and their four children) went to reside in Ghosh Gatif Settlement in Gaza Strip but later they moved to Netivot, a small city located in the south of Israel.

Cohen's encounter with Muslims began during his frequent visits to the old Jerusalem market because of his work. It was here where he corresponded with some religious Muslim men and, in time, he began to read an english-translated copy of the Holy Qur'an. Gradually he began to see Judaism as racist and turned toward Islam after reading the Qur'an. Talking to Channel 10 TV, Cohen says:

> When I opened the Qur'an the First time I could not put it down, it is what I always believed Judaism was supposed to be! Every criticism of the Jews was precise but not hateful, it was Allah showing the Jews how to correct ourselves and return to true Monotheism.

After all that spiritual awakening he experienced, Cohen told his wife Lona, a devout Jew from the United States that he wanted to embrace Islam. "I said, listen, I love you very much . . . and I have to be honest with you . . . I read the Qur'an and I agree with everything it says in the Qur'an, and if I continue saying that I'm a religious Jew, I would be a liar." Of course he embraced the religion and changed his name to Yousef Mohammed Al-Khattab.

His shocked wife Lona says, "two weeks later (after Khattab's reversion) I decided to read the Qur'an, and I felt that all my questions were now answered!" Lona and his four children: Rah maim Shalom (11 years old), Hasiba (9 years old), Ezra (7 years old), and Afoadia (5 years old) reverted from the Jewish religion to Islam as well. The wife changed her name to Gamar. The children study in an Islamic school and speak Arabic fluently while their father is at an advanced stage in learning Arabic. His four children study the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book, instead of the Torah, its Jewish counterpart.

The family moved out to settle in the Al-Toor Mountain in western Jerusalem and Khattab works in an Islamic charity organization in the city. He set up an Islamic center for calling people to Islam, which embarks on vast activities in calling the Jews to embrace Islam and actually many

Before (As a Jew) **After** (As a Muslim)

Jews embraced Islam because of Khattab's Islamic activities. "Muslims are all inclusive and the whole message of Islam is to invite Jews, Nazis, capitalists, all religions and beliefs," He said.

Khattab points it out that his becoming a Muslim was also influenced by the research he did on the internet. He met a Muslim online with whom they brainstormed on religion. He also made correspondences with Muslim scholars in Jerusalem who would elucidate to him more about the Islamic religion.

Khattab says that he adheres to the *Sunnah* (Way) of Prophet Muhammad and follows Ahmed Bin Hanbal School of legislation. In addition, he learned the Islamic religion from the books and *fatawa* (legal decrees) of prominent Muslim scholars such as Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Bin Baaz, Sheikh Nassir Al-Deen Al-Albani, Sheikh Mundhir, and Sheikh Qasim Al-Hakee.

Yousef and his family

When asked about him being a Jewish Rabbi and a revert to Islam living in a settlement in Gaza doing Islamic missionary activities, his reply was, "I lived in Gosh Gatif settlement in Gaza, but now I am hated in Israel, because of my Islam, and the reason of being Moslem is the monotheism of Allah."

Instead of supporting the Israeli Orthodox Jewish political party Shas, Khattab now supports the Islamic Hamas, according to a report broadcast on Israel TV. He believes an Islamic state should be set up where Israel and the Palestinian areas are now located. In fact, he refuses to say the word Israel, choosing instead to call the area Palestine.

When it comes to Osama bin Laden, Khattab finds him to be a courageous Muslim. However, Khattab does not think Osama is responsible for the World Trade Center (attacks). Khattab claims that September 11 terror attacks were an *inside job* and he blames U.S. foreign policy for spawning the terrorism that carried out the attacks. Despite his radical anti-Western views, Khattab says he does not support terrorism of any kind. "His transformation from being an ultra-Orthodox American Jew to a fundamentalist Muslim gives him license to preach a higher level of invective against Jews than his Gentile counterparts", said Rabbi Tovia Singer.

"I am hated in Israel, because of my Islam, and the reason of being Moslem is the monotheism of Allah."

Yousef Cohen at a demonstration. This shows alot about Israel and Middle East politics. Sane people don't hate people who have been nice to them but why does this former Rabbi hate Israel? Qur'an 55:60 says "Is there any reward for good other than good?". Others may be tempted to rephrase the verse in its opposite.

Khattab denies his Jewish past while insisting to be a 100 percent Muslim. He once made a parody of a blessing that observant Jews say every morning, in which they thank God for not making them gentiles. "Blessed are Thou, Lord Our God," Khattab began in the traditional Jewish blessing, but ended it with, "for not making me a Jew."

Joseph Cohen's turning to Islam is a clear manifestation of the following Qur'anic verse:

> "And there are, certainly, among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), those who believe in Allâh and in that which has been revealed to you, and in that which has been revealed to them, humbling themselves before Allâh. They do not sell the Verses of Allâh for a little price, for them is a reward with their Lord. Surely, Allâh is Swift in account." [Q 3:199]

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Khattab, wife and children
http://yousefalkhattab.blogspot.com/

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Marry Fallot

Mary Fallot, a petite and demure white Frenchwoman reverted to Islam in 2002, after asking herself spiritual questions to which she found no answers in her childhood Catholicism. "For me," Fallot confesses, "Islam is a message of love, of tolerance and peace."

"Islam is simpler, more rigorous, and it's easier because it is explicit . . ."

Miss Fallot laughs when she is asked by her surprised co-workers whether she had a Muslim boyfriend who initiated her decision of embracing Islam. "When I told my colleagues at work that I had converted, their first reaction was to ask whether I had a Muslim boyfriend," she recalls. "They couldn't believe I had done it of my own free will." Mary explained that she was drawn to Islam by the answers it provided. She made it clear that she liked the way "Islam demands a closeness to God. Islam is simpler, more rigorous, and it's easier because it is explicit. I was looking for a framework; man needs rules and behavior to follow. Christianity did not give me the same reference points."

[**References:** Ford, Peter. "Why European Women Are Turning to Islam." The Christian Science Monitor 27 Dec. 2005.]

Dr. Garry Miller

Garry Miller is a mathematician and a theologian of Canadian descent. He was active in Christian missionary work at a particular point of his life but he soon began to discover many inconsistencies in the Bible. In 1978, he happened to read the Qur'an expecting that it, too, would contain a mixture of truth and falsehood. He discovered to his amazement that the message of the Qur'an was precisely the same as the essence of truth that he had distilled from the Bible. He became a Muslim and since then has been active in giving public presentations on Islam including radio and television appearances. He is also the author of several articles and publications about Islam.

"What's amazing is that the Holy Qur'an asks Muslims and non-Muslims to try to find mistakes in this book and it tells them that they will never find any . . ."

Being a university mathematician by profession (at Toronto University), always armed with considerable analytical skills, Garry Miller pondered on the Verses of Qur'an and the result was total bewilderment and surrendering to the Author of Qur'an. This is one of the verses:

> Do they not consider the Qur´an (with care)? Had it been from other Than Allah, they would surely have found therein Much discrepancy. [Q 4:82]

Commenting on this verse, Dr Miller says:

> One of the well known scientific principles is the principle of finding mistakes or looking for mistakes in a theory until it's proved to be right (Falsification Test). What's amazing is that the Holy Qur'an asks Muslims and non-Muslims to try to find mistakes in this book and it tells them that they will never find any . . . . No writer in the world has the courage to write a book and say that it's empty of mistakes, but the Qur'an, on the contrary, tells you that it has no mistakes and asks you to try to find one and you won't find any.

In 1977, Professor Miller (still a Christian) had a debate with the renowned Islamic preacher Ahmad Deedat. And in 1978, after an increasing stock of logical evidences pointing Islam as the truth, Professor Miller decided to embrace Islam and adopted the name Abdul-Ahad which means "Worshipper of the Only One." He worked for some years at Oil and Minerals University in Saudi Arabia and then devoted his life to preaching Islam through TV programs and public lectures.

Garry Miller has authored several articles and publications on comparative religion. Some of the publications attributed to him are:

►A Concise Reply to Christianity - A Muslim View
►Followers of Jesus
►The Amazing Qur'an
►Some Thoughts on the 'Proofs' of the Alleged Divinity of Jesus
►The Basis of Islamic Belief
►The Difference between the Bible and the Qur'an
►Missionary Christianity - A Muslim's Analysis
►What the Gospels Mean to Muslims

Among the lectures delivered by him are:

►A Concise Reply to Christianity. [34 minutes]
►Amazing Quran. [1 hour 59 minutes]
►Communicating Islam to Non-Muslims. [1 hour 21 minutes]
►History of Religion. [58 minutes]
►Islam and Christianity I - Thinking. [1 hour 43 minutes]
►Islam and Christianity II - Scripture. [1 hour 53 minutes]
►Islam and Christianity Snippets. [1 hour 13 minutes]
►Islam and Christianity Symposium. [2 hours 7 minutes]
►Islam and Christianity. [1 hour 31 minutes]
►Muslims Misguided or Misunderstood. [1 hour 43 minutes]
►Reason and Revelation. [1 hour 22 minutes]
►Christian Evangelism. [58 minutes]
►Basis for Muslim Belief. [53 minutes]
►Dialogue: Is the Bible or Qur'an God's Word Gary Miller, Yusuf Buccas and Walt Stroker
►Introduction to Christianity. [1 hour 32 minutes]
►Modern History of Christianity. [1 hour 17 minutes]
►Dialogue: The Place of the Scriptures in Christianity and Islam - Gary Miller and Jimmy Swaggart. [2 hours 18 minutes]
►Impressions on Muslim-Christian Dialogue.
►What The Gospel Means to Muslims. [1 hour 20 minutes]

In one of Gary Miller's lectures, he uttered the following words: "If it's the truth, then it will work for you and not for anybody else, if your mind is clear". Could it be that Christianity didn't work for him and that Islam did? You watch his debates on YouTube. The audio lectures by Gary miller can freely be downloaded from the internet.

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[**References:** < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tt473Gk1vOs>; <http://www.thetruereligion.org/priests.htm#miller>; "The Man who Challenged the Quran." rasoulallah.net <http://www.rasoulallah.net/subject_en.asp?hit=1&parent_id=764&sub_id=7631>Last retrieved 12/05/2009.]
Khatab.htm>;<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve4gPXfly-g>; Dunia AL-Watan (Palestinian Newspaper); <http://www.islamweb.net/ver2/archive/article.php?lang=E&id=20069>]

Kristiane Backer

Kristiane Backer was born in the beautiful harbour city of Hamburg in Germany on 13 December 1966. Her professional life began at 21 when she joined Radio Hamburg for a two- year training "volontariat" as a radio journalist. Two years later, Kristiane was chosen out of thousands of hopeful applicants as the first German presenter for the music television station MTV Europe. Consequently, in 1989, she moved to London. Narrating her experiences, she says:

> It was brilliant - I was in my twenties, I lived in Notting Hill, I was the new girl in town and so I was invited everywhere, photographed by the paparazzi, the works. I met lots of famous people (everyone from Robbie Williams to Lenny Kravitz), and had a great time. I seemed to spend most of my salary on clothes. I got to travel all over Europe, always to the best places - Barcelona, Istanbul, Paris; once I even went to Boston to interview the Rolling Stones, and I went on the road with Prince for a week. I was the number-one woman on MTV and was literally on television all the time: I presented the Coca-Cola report and the European Top 20, I interviewed bands and millions of people recognized me all over Europe. At a rock concert once I stood on stage in front of 70,000 people.

"I used to drink champagne at parties every night, but now I don't touch any alcohol."

Backer received several TV awards, including The Golden Camera and two Golden Ottos. Besides travelling around Europe, she also had the opportunity to travel extensively throughout the East. Among the countries she has visited include Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. She says, "My extensive travels throughout the Muslim world have given me the opportunity to dig deep into the intricate cultural fabric of Muslim societies and gain a profound knowledge of their religion and way of life."

In 1992, she met Imran Khan, then captain of the Pakistani cricket team. That was the first time she met a Muslim and they had many discussions on Islam. He gave her some books on Islam and Kristiane ventured into the study of Islam. "I began to challenge my prejudices and look behind the headlines. I read the Qur'an and it all started to make sense." She says. "I discovered that [Islam] is pro-women and pro-men; in Islam, women had the right to vote in the year 600. Men dress modestly, women dress modestly; neither should flirt with the eyes, but rather they should lower their gaze." When asked about the resources she had used to learn about Islam, Kristiane mentioned that

beside reading the Holy Qur'an, she also read the books written by scholars such as Martin Lings, Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Le Gai Eaton, Annemarie Mould, Dr. Zaki Badawi, Murad Hofmann, Muhammad Asad, to mention a few. She even met some of these scholars in order to learn more from them. Spurred by the intellectual conviction in Islam, Baker became its beholder and after realizing the modesty she missed, Baker says: "I stopped wearing miniskirts and started wearing longer clothes on TV . . . I'm shocked at how many women wear so few clothes to get into the headlines and on the front page - it's really degrading."

It was in 1995 when she left Protestantism and embraced Islam. She now prays five times a day and fasts during Ramadan. "I used to drink champagne at parties every night, but now I don't touch any alcohol." In 2001, she went to Mecca. "It was wonderful, I came away feeling happy and at peace."

Later, she joined Westminster University and studied natural medicine including herbs, aromatherapy, qui gong, Chinese medicine, flower essence, and homeopathy. In 2002, she qualified as a homeopath and in September of the following year she launched her online homeopathic clinic, www.energy-for-health.com. She now has her own homeopathic clinic in Germany. She is also involved with a project to develop a range of natural cosmetics and food supplements using traditional healing substances and exotic oils found in Arabian countries.

Besides natural medicine, Kristiane did Religious Studies including Islamic art, Islamic medicine, and social and political issues in Islam at Birkbeck University. She is proficient in French and Arabic.

She continues to host many events in Europe. Kristiane is a popular conference host and facilitator. Some Conferences hosted by her include: Islamophobia Conference (Islam Channel Copenhagen), Sage software Awards (Wiesbaden), European Business Awards (Barcelona), European Electronic Awards (Munich), Royal Mail Awards (Berlin), Infineon Supplier Awards 2004 (Munich), Pirelli Calendar 2004 launch "The making off" London, PR Report Awards (Berlin), VW Nick Nickel Gala and awards ceremony, GE Capital IT Solutions for Compuserve European Kick- Off Meeting/ Awards.

She regularly writes articles on health issues for the British and German press and comments on TV and radio. Recent publications include *Time Out*, the *Daily Express*, *Compass* and *Red magazine*, BBC Radio *The Sadie Nine Show*, LBC Jules *Eden* show, Sky News, ARD TV and NTV. Since May 2004 Kristiane has been presenting natural health and wellness tips every Wednesday at around 12:40 CET (Central European Time) in the lunch time magazine programme *Punkt 12* on Germany's largest TV station, RTL. And among the PRESS TV programmes is *World Week Watch* – a 23-minutes round-up of world events by Oscar Reyes and Kristiane Backer.

Islam is what brought a new life on her, "It was the greatest gift I ever received." She said, appreciating the God-given gift of Islam. Since 14 April 2006 she has been married to the journalist Rashid Jaafar.

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A.A. Rahman

His name was Dileep Kumar. He was a non-believer. He is a well-known celebrity figure in India who revolutionized Bollywood music but now he is happy to be a Muslim.

On January 6, 1966, in Madras (now Chennai), India, Dileep Kumar was born. Dileep started learning the piano at the age of 4, and at the age of 9, his father passed away. The pressure of supporting the family fell on him, and Dileep had to join Ilayaraja's troupe as a keyboard player at the age of 11. He dropped out of school as a result of this and traveled all around the world with various orchestras. Later in life, he won a scholarship at the famed Trinity College of Music at Oxford University in the UK, where he obtained a degree in Western Classical Music. At 36 years old, A.R. Rahman had revolutionized Indian film music and one would only expect this musical genius to reach greater heights. He's one of the *top 25 biggest selling artists* in the world (based on sales of CDs and cassettes of his soundtracks).

One traumatizing tragedy was the falling ill of his sister and numerous attempts to cure her failed. The family tried everything from medicine to religious methods like *havans* and prayers in the church. Out of desperation, they went to a Muslim Sheikh who prayed for her and by the will of God, she made a miraculous recovery. Experiences such as death of his father, his

sister's sickness, and the influences and teachings of the sheikh made the entire family to convert to Islam. That was in the year 1989. Thus A. S. Dileep Kumar became A. R. Rahman. Today, Rahman says, "Islam has given me peace. As Dileep I had an inferiority complex. As A. R. Rahman I feel like I have been born again."

When asked what prompted him to embrace Islam, he said:

> I remember my father suffering. He was taken to eight to nine hospitals, including the CMC hospital in Vellore and the Vijaya hospital in Madras. I saw him suffering physical pain . . . . I remember the Christian priests who would read from the Bible beside his hospital bed . . . . I remember the pujas and the yagnas performed by the pundits . . . . After my father passed away, for some years when I was a teenager I believed there was no God. But there was a feeling of restlessness within me. I realized that there can be no life without a force governing us . . . without one God. And I found what I was looking for in Islam . . . . When we shifted to this house, we resolved to stick to the faith.

After the conversion, Rahman became a very religious and devout Muslim. However, the famous music wizard in India A.R. Rahman also has some lamentations:

> Islam is a religion of peace, love, coexistence, tolerance and modernity. But due to the behavior of a few of us, it's labeled as an intolerant orthodoxy. The image of Islam is being tarnished by a small group of people and that Muslims must come forward to present before the world the correct picture of their divine faith. The enormity of their ignorance of the Islamic history and its code of conduct is mind-boggling. We should be united in fighting these elements for the cause of Islam . . . Muslims should go to lengths to follow the basics, which say 'be kind to your neighbors, keep smiling when you meet others, pray and do charity.

"Islam has given me peace. As Dileep I had an inferiority complex. As A. R. Rahman I feel like I have been born again."

Rahman is the 1995 recipient of the *Mauritius National Award* and the *Malaysian Award* for contributions to music. He was nominated for a *Laurence Olivier Award* for his first West-End production. A four time National Award winner and conferred the *Padma Shri* from the Government of India. Rahman has received six awards for Best Music at the *Tamil Nadu State Film Awards* and eleven awards for his scores at the *Filmfare* and *Filmfare Awards South* each. On 11 December 2008, Rahman was nominated for a *Golden Globe* for *Slumdog Millionaire* in the category of *Best Original Score.* Rahman is also involved in various charitable causes. In 2004, he was appointed as the Global Ambassador of the Stop TB Partnership, a project by WHO.

Rahman credits all his inspiration and success to Allah:

> I am whatever (I am) because of my parents' prayers to Allah. I am whatever I am because the prayers I pray conscientiously, sincerely and with full faith five times a day. I will be whatever I am only because of Allah, I know it. He has given me everything. He can take everything away and I accept His decision without any questions, without a murmur. Allah is my everything. I am just an infinitesimal creation of His. He has created me for a specific mission. I will be committing a sin if I don't fulfill that mission. That's my only belief. That's the only thing that matters to me.

A.A. Rahman (left) with the former UN Secretary General.

[**References:** Eur, Andy Gregory. The International Who's Who in Popular Music 2002. pp. 419 – 420; A.R. Rahman: Short Biography." TFM Page Magazine Jan. 2006. <http://tfmmagazine.mayyam.com/jan06/?t=5568>]

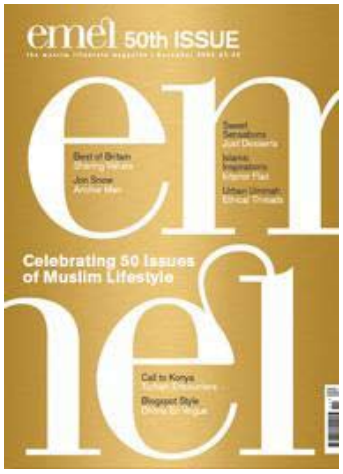
Sarah Joseph

Sarah Joseph comes from an old English Roman Catholic family that traces its roots to the Norman Conquest. Her mother started Britain's first modeling agency, and Joseph recalls being surrounded by "the most beautiful people" in the agency's Bond Street offices.

The Catholic daughter of an accountant and a models' agent recalls chasing after Naomi Campbell at 14 with her mother's business card. As a teenager, her brother became a Muslim. Determined to confront her negative image of Muslims, Sarah began reading about the religion. "Slowly, Islam kept answering many of the questions which I had until I wanted to be a Muslim," she says. And at age 17, Sarah converted to Islam, abandoning Catholicism which she has been brought up in. She then decided to put on hijab, a dressing which was giving her liberation and respect. "I wanted to be judged by what I say, not according to what I look like," she said.

In an Interview by Gabrielle Procter, Sarah Joseph said:

> . . . Being Muslim shapes you, but first and foremost I'm a human being. I lived 16 years of my life without being Muslim, so being human, a woman, a mother, an editor, a Londoner - all of these things shape me. But my role as a mother is shaped by being a Muslim; my role as an editor, my concept of being part of a community, is very much shaped by my philosophy . . . . I'm a person of faith and I believe a person of faith must be optimistic. I see young people who are involved at every level of British society - articulate, clever, inspirational individuals who feel strongly that they have to benefit this society and be part of Muslim society. I think that Muslims have the capacity to give a lot. As long as people start seeing Islam as part of the solution and not part of the problem they will go a long way.



". . . Slowly, Islam kept answering many of the questions which I had until I wanted to be a Muslim . . . ."

Sarah received her BA (hons) in Religious Studies from King's College London. She did a Post graduate research into *Britons Embracing Islam.* Besides, she was the Winner of the 1999-2000 Prince of Wales Chevening/King Faisal Foundation Scholarship. She is editor of a glossy lifestyle magazine *Emel* (the most widely read British Muslim magazine – its title sounding like the letters M and L, as in **M**uslim **L**ife, as well as the Arabic word for "hope"). She is also a commentator on British Muslims, a writer, and a broadcaster. She is a part-time doctoral student who lectures frequently and widely on interfaith issues, religious tolerance and women's issues. In 2004, she was awarded an OBE (a British honor

which stands for *Order of the British Empire*), for services to "interfaith dialogue". Sarah has appeared on a variety of British television programmes including the current affairs programmes - *Panorama* and *Johnathan Dimbleby*. Besides working as a Specialist Researcher for the BBC's Learning Zone in the BBC's 2001 Islam series, she was also the first female editor of a major Muslim publication: *Trends*. Sarah Joseph is a founding editor of Muslim Council Britain's *The Common Good Consultant on Islamic Affairs* - exploring issues with, and providing diversity training to, employment, education, health bodies, police etc on the beliefs and needs of Muslims in the UK.

She is married to Mahmud ar-Rashid, a trial and human rights lawyer. Among the youth and community organizations which ar-Rashid lead are: the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the UK's foremost Muslim representative body and as chairman of the Islamic Society of Britain. The couple has three children: Hasan, Sumayyah and Amirah.

Reflecting on the unprecedented surge to Islam, especially with estimates suggesting anywhere between 10,000 and 50,000 people a year convert to Islam in the UK, Sarah predicts that by 2020, Islam in UK will be the most widely practiced religion, "We are the second largest faith in Britain and will be the largest practicing faith in Britain by 2020 if you use church and mosque attendance as a measure," she told the GDN.

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Hamza Yusuf

Just some few days after September 11, for reasons that remain rather unclear, the FBI decided to pay a call on the home of the white man in this photo. "He isn't home," said his wife. "He's with the president." Deciding not to believe her the FBI immediately called the White House to check and the voice at the other end responded, "He's got 100% security clearance". This man had declared two days before the attack: "This country (USA) is facing a terrible fate . . . . This country stands condemned. It stands condemned like Europe stood condemned because of what it did -- and lest people forget that Europe suffered two world wars after conquering the Muslim lands." In fact, at a rally the previous October before September 11 attacks, this man said that, "America has to learn . . . . If you remain on the side of injustice, the wrath of God will come."

And at the 21st ICNA Annual Convention, held at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in 1996, he declared:

> I am a citizen of this country not by choice but by birth. I reside in this country not by choice but by conviction in attempting to spread the message of Islam in this country. I became Muslim in part because I did not believe in the false gods of this society whether we call them Jesus or democracy or the Bill of Rights or any other element of this society that is held sacrosanct by the ill-informed peoples that make up this charade of a society. . . . [T]here should be no voting or debate . . . [W]e have no room for ayes or nays.

"I became Muslim in part because I did not believe in the false gods of this society whether we call them Jesus or democracy or the Bill of Rights or any other element of this society that is held sacrosanct by the ill-informed peoples that make up this charade of a society . . . ."

The man was born as Mark Hanson in Walla Walla, Washington, and grew up in Northern California in a Greek Orthodox family. He is the son of two US academics of a Catholic and Greek Orthodox background. At the age of 17, in 1977, Hanson converted to Islam in Santa Barbara, California, after having a near-death experience in a car accident which led him to read the Qur'an and eventually become a Muslim. He then adopted the Muslim name, Hamza Yusuf. Almost immediately after his conversion, Hamza Yusuf ventured into knowledge seeking studying Arabic, Islamic jurisprudence, philosophy, and spiritual psychology with masters in the Muslim world. In 1979, he moved to the United Arab Emirates and studied, for four years, in the Islamic Institute of Al-'Ain. Hamza Yusuf travelled to many places in search of knowledge. The places he visited include Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Madina, Saudi Arabia.

Having spent ten-years of studies abroad, Hamza returned to the United States and completed degrees in nursing at Imperial Valley College and religious studies at San Jose State University.

Yusuf is the first American lecturer to teach in Morocco's prestigious and oldest university, the University of Al-Karaouine in Fes.

Now, how and why did this Sheikh have access to the Oval Office? Hamza Yusuf was invited to the *White House* nine days after Sept. 11 attacks, making him the only Muslim leader along with five other religious leaders who were called to meet with President Bush. He suggested that Mr. Bush change the name of the military's impending operation in Afghanistan, "Infinite Justice," because it would offend Muslims, who believe the only source of infinite justice, is God. Mr. Bush responded by changing the operation's name to "Operation Enduring Freedom," thus gaining the title: "Adviser to the President." The president had listened. He said he was sorry that the Pentagon, which chose the title, had no theologians on staff. However, Hamza said that Mr. Bush since then hasn't taken any of his advice. Yusuf also met with the Arab League, and global leaders at the World Economic Forum at Davos. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf has denounced terrorism and extremism, while promoting cooperation and education.

In a BBC interview, Frank Gardner posed this question: ". . . Sheikh Hamza, where do you stand on President Bush's war on terror? Hamza Yusuf reply was:

> I think that the idea of a war on an abstract noun is unacceptable. I really believe that carpet-bombing, bombing civilian populations is a form of terror - it's state terror as opposed to vigilante terrorism. Obviously state terror - the state has a power to justify it. But at the end of the day innocent people killed anywhere - when I see Iraqi children in a state of terror because of bombs I consider that a form of terrorism. So I think the war on terror has to be a war on modern warfare - period.

Hamza Yusuf is the Imam of the Santa Clara Masjid in the Bay Area. He is a writer, a lecturer, and a teacher of Arabic & Islamic studies. He lectured at Harvard, Stanford, Brigham Young, Ohio State, and San Jose State University as well as University of California-Davis. Laurie Goodstein, religion reporter for *The New York Times*, compares Yusuf's communication skills to former President Clinton's. "He has that Clinton ability to focus in on whoever he's speaking to, look them directly in the eyes and make them feel like they are the only one in the room even though there might be 200 people in the room," she says. In a lecture, sponsored by the Islamic Society of Stanford University and the Zaytuna Institute entitled *"Islam and the Destiny of Man: Meditations on the Modern Condition."* Hamza Yusuf said:

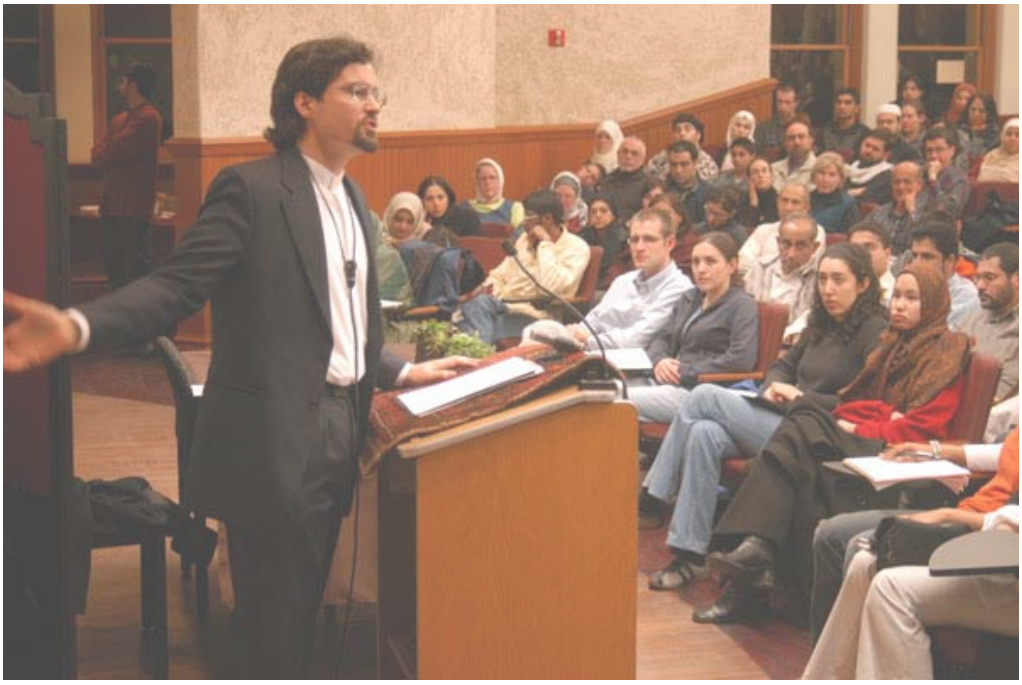
> Islam is deeply rooted in the idea that man does have a destiny and a humanity. Muslims are ostensibly one out of every five people in the world, yet obviously this is because they are born in a Muslim region. Similarly, the majority of Americans are Christian because they were born Christian.

Yusuf then went on to detail what he called "the problem of conviction" when one is born into a specific religion. He said:

> . . . In the words of a famous Muslim scholar, true faith must be grounded on sound conviction. There are very few people who are brave enough to doubt their own faith and convictions. But it is not easy to challenge someone who has thought deeply about his beliefs.

Presently, Hamza Yusuf lives on a cul-de-sac in Danville, a Northern California suburb, in a house with a three-car garage. The living room is spread with Persian rugs; it is mostly bare of furniture for dinner is usually held in traditional Arab style — on the floor. His wife, Liliana, converted to Islam after meeting Mr. Yusuf in college, disappointing her Catholic Hispanic parents. Hamza and Liliana have five children, all boys who take karate lessons.

He is currently the executive director of the Zaytuna Institute. He also travels frequently to major North American and European cities to teach and lecture to both Muslims and non-Muslim audiences. His *reality show* attracts over 80 million viewers. He is also working on establishing the first Islamic seminary in the United States.



Muslim scholar Hamza Yusuf calling for the West and Islam to learn from each other.

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Balqis Chelang'at Chepkwony

"I found it hard believing that Jesus did not die on the cross"

~ Balqis' perception after reading *Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction!* by Ahmed Deedat

Either the sky or the heaven was the limit for Caroline Chelang'at Chepkwony. She was a brilliant student always topping in her primary school. Her father wanted her to become a doctor but a white man, a friend to Mr. Chepkwony (her father) suggested that Caroline pursue Actuarial Science. They heeded the advice. It is only the top scorers nationwide that are eligible for places in the very few highly selective national government-supported secondary schools in Kenya and Caroline Chelang'at was one of the students selected. She chose Alliance Girls High School. A school reputed as a high-standard institution of secondary learning in Kenya, often attracting news coverage on radio, television, and newspaper. Students at Alliance Girls High School often refer to their school as "Bush" and the students as "Busherians." Most likely the informal name was because of the dense vegetation that used to surround the school. It is by no way related to the former President of America who was missed by a shoe. The school has consistently excelled in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations, frequently earning the position of top 10 best schools in Kenya.

After scoring KCSE score an aggregate A-, with plain A's in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Science and Geography, Caroline automatically qualified for a place in the state-supported universities. University of Nairobi (UoN), the largest university in Kenya, enrolled her in the department of mathematics to undertake a Bachelor of Science in Actuarial Sciences. University of Nairobi was the only University in Kenya offering Bachelor of Science (Actuarial Science). Back then in 2002, University of Nairobi was taking only 16 government-selected students nationwide and Chelang'at was one of those who qualified.

In the second year of her academic study, the then Caroline Chelang'at met Salim, a BA student at the University of Nairobi. Salim's priority list of conversation included religion. He provoked Chelang'at's mind regarding her belief systems. Salim invited her to do research on religion and Caroline listened to him. Without much ado, Salim handed her some thought-provoking literatures on comparative religion and a list of websites that scrutinize religions in the light of reason and intellect.

Among the books Caroline read are the works of the great Muslim scholar Ahmed Deedat such as:

- ►Is the Bible the word of God?
- ►Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction!
- ►Resurrection or resuscitation?
- ►What was the sign of Jonah?
- ►Who moved the Stone?
- ►Qur'an Miracle of Miracles
- ►What the Bible says about Muhammad (pbuh)?
- ►Christ in Islam
- ►Combat kit

"I used to perceive Muslims as weird, disillusioned people who believe in a dead Prophet"

Ahmed Deedat's books wrecked her Christianity and Caroline was left with only one choice; to convert to Islam. That was 14 April 2005 at the age of 22 when Caroline made the decision to embrace Islam and traded her Christian first name for a Muslim one, while retaining her Kalenjin names. She had become Balqis Chelang'at Chepkwony. Before her conversion, her mind had been full of negative ideas about Islam and Muslims. "I used to perceive Muslims as weird, disillusioned people who believe in a dead Prophet," she said. Other books she read before her conversion, included *Let the Bible Speak* by Abdul Rahman Dimashkiah, *Oneness of God: The Ultimate Solution to the Trinitarian Controversy* by Marmarinta Umar P. Mababaya and *The Pillars of Faith* by Jaafar Shaikh Idris. Furthermore, Balqis had watched Ahmed Deedat debating prominent Christian theologians. Remarkably, after her conversion, she took a month and a half to memorize *Juzuu Amma*, one part (Juzuu) of the Qur'an (i.e 1/30 of the entire Qur'an). Despite her busy program doing her final years' project, Balqis managed to memorize the 1/30 of the entire Qur'an. This may be equivalent of memorizing the entire *Gospel of Mathew*, word after word! Kenya's largest mosque, *Jamia Mosque* has a department for Reverts where classes are organized to teach the new Muslims about Islam. Immediately after her reversion, Balqis grabbed the chance and graduated from the Reverts Program at the Jamia Institute.

Balqis took Qur'anic teachings seriously, in compliance with the verse, ". . . take the Scripture [i.e., adhere to it] with determination." [Q 19:12]. After she graduated from the University of Nairobi in 2006, like any other graduate, Balqis ventured into job searching expedition. Her family and friends also helped in hooking her up with lucrative job positions. Her father working as a Chief Accountant at Moi University would definitely have a myriad of business connections with people from different other institutions and Companies. This would be enough leverage to get Balqis a job. With Actuarial Science, Balqis had a 100% chance of being recruited by Insurance Companies* and Banks. In fact, she got many companies willing to hire her at a starting salary of Kshs 40 000 (about 520 $). Despite being financially crippled, Balqis turned down the offers just because the insurance companies and Banking companies were illegal according to Islamic Sharia. "She must be fanatically crazy," her friends and relatives wondered. But to her, it was unethical to work in an interest-based company while defying God's words: "Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest." [Q 2:275]. She had strong hope that by leaving something for the sake of God, God would compensate her with something even better than what she left. She took the words of Prophet Muhammad very seriously: "You will never give up anything for the sake of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, but Allah will give you something better than it in its stead."[48] Balqis was consoled by Islamic teachings which gave her enormous hope and strength. She was putting the following saying of Prophet Muhammad into practice: "O people, fear Allah and be moderate in seeking a living, for no soul will die until it has received all its provision, even if it is slow in coming. So fear Allah and be moderate in seeking provision; take that which is permissible and leave that which is forbidden." [49]

Instead, Balqis took up a job in an Auditing firm along Mombasa Road which paid her Kshs 10 000 (about 130$) per month. From the salary she was to spend Kshs 2500 (about 32$) to pay rent to her Guantanamo-looking-like room in Eastleigh, a suburb of Nairobi City. The room she rented was around 2.5 by 1.5 square meters, too small to accommodate a bed. She just had a mattress which was suspended to the window during the day to pave way to a sitting room and at night the mattress was spread to the ground for the place to be transformed to a bedroom. Her monthly transport expenses to her place of work was Kshs 3 000 (about 40$) and her food cost per month was around Kshs 3 000 (about 40$). Putting aside other expenses like medical, the Kshs 10 000 (about 130$) salary was not enough but Balqis persevered.

After one month she got another job as a Bursar at WAMY High School earning Kshs 20 000 (about 260$). She worked with the High School for two months before God's promise started to materialize. She received an unexpected call. "Is this Chelang'at . . ." the caller asked, "could you please avail yourself for a job interview at our offices." She had got a good job at Nairobi based Hass Petroleum Company as an accountant. Hass Petroleum is the regional oil Marketing company that has fully fledged operations in East Africa and the Great Lakes Region and is rapidly expanding its activities to other areas. Balqis calls the company a great blessing from Allah for it is the

*See Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah li'l-Buhooth al-'Ilmiyyah wa'l-Ifta', 15/8: {"Life insurance is a kind of commercial insurance, which is haraam (forbidden), because it involves uncertainty, interest and gambling, and consuming wealth unlawfully. It is not permissible to work in commercial insurance companies, because this is a kind of cooperating in sin, which Allah has forbidden, as He says: "Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment"[Q 5:2]}

48. Ahmad # 22565. It was also classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Da'eefah, hadith no. 5.

49. Ibn Maajah #2144, Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Ibn Maajah.

Hass Plaza (Located in Nairobi on Lower Hill Road). The Head Office of Hass Petroleum Company where Balqis works.

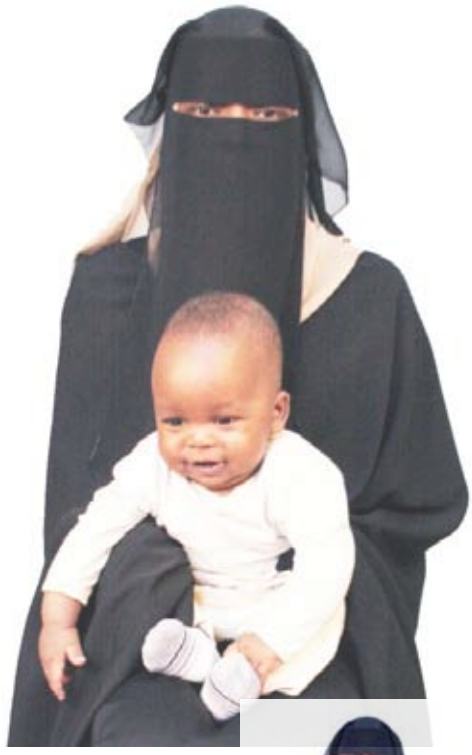
only company in Kenya that does not only separate women's offices from men's but also women are allowed to wear their Islamic attires including niqab (face veil). In addition, the company has a reserved place for prayers and at the stipulated Islamic prayer times the employees are allowed to pause their work for prayers. Her starting Salary was double what she was earning from WAMY high School. Moreover, the company has given her an interest-free loan to which she intended to buy land in Nairobi. Currently, the figures in her paying slip is not less than Kshs 80 000 (about 1039$). She now understands that *whoever leaves something for the sake of Allah will surely be rewarded with something far better.* She left interest-based jobs for the sake of God and now she is working with an Islamic friendly Company. Indeed, this lady had the audacity to go to Heaven by becoming God-conscious in denouncing the forbidden businesses. Ibn Masood, a great scholar and disciple of Prophet Muhammad, defined Piety in these terms: ". . . to obey God and never disobey Him, to remember Him and not forget Him, to thank Him and never be ungrateful to Him."

At this point, it is vital to digress from her story to remind ourselves that all our needs are broadly categorized as *something good you are looking for* or *something bad you fight against.* One solution for the two needs is provided in the two different verses of the Qur'an. If you are working hard to run away from misfortunes/harms e.g. diseases, joblessness, bad boss, distress, insecurity . . . God says: "And whoever fears Allah – He will make for him a way out." [Q 65:2]. A way out of your hardships and adversities, a way out of your fears, a way out of your worries, way out of bankruptcy, unemployment, damage to reputation in the market, natural disaster, technical failure, business failure, ill-health, poverty, and most importantly a way out of Afterlife punishment.

The Go-getters will find the path to achieve their dreams so easy if they are God-conscious. The things you want to possess such as a good job, good house, a dream car, outstanding spouse, riches, anything you want it is easily achievable with the help of piety. The Qur'an reveals: "And for those who fear Allah, He will make their path easy." [Q65:4]. Even your path to Paradise would be made easier. And that is the greatest success.

Success is therefore determined by the level of God-consciousness. All your dreams will be easily achieved if you have piety and at the same time, with piety, God will make a way out of all the misfortunes and worries that harbors your mind. To build the bridge between success and you, piety must be observed. To be pious means that you must search for the true religion/revelation, know the do's and don'ts of God and keep up to them. There are others who become 'successful' without being pious. This transient earth-based fleeting 'success' will avail them not in the hereafter. Their abode will be hell. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" [Mark 8:36].

Balqis is now married, and adding to her stock of blessings, God gifted her with a baby boy. Inspired by the world's most influential person* and his recommendation: "Give name (to your children) after my name (i.e. Muhammad) . . . ."[50] the couple rejoiced naming their baby Muhammad. If they get another boy, they intend to name him Ahmad*, yet another name of the Messenger of Allah as mentioned by Jesus himself in a Qur'anic prophecy:



> "And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad." But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, "This is obvious magic."[Q 61:6].

"Oh wait a minute," one would question, "did Jesus predict a phenomenon called 'Holy Ghost' or a being named Ahmad?" The answer depends on how much we know about the authenticity of the Bible. Whether it was written according to inspiration or according to uninspired human beings. Or whether it was originally preserved or tampered with! Basically, the answer depends on whether we studied the Bible employing a historical-critical approach or the usual devotional-approach to understanding the Bible. Ignorance in its best manifestation is captured when a person who has never read even a single book evidencing the bible to be inauthentic persists that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. Dr. Laurence B. Brown who did an extensive research on the authenticity of biblical scripture is one person who is qualified in giving the following statement: "In the face of modern textual criticism, we deceive ourselves (as well as invite ridicule and condemnation) if we believe the Old or New Testaments to be the unadulterated Word of God."[51] Before you unleash a plethora of qualms and quibbles . . . or rather I should say, a fair and scholarly response to Brown's statement should be made after you have read either his book

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* Dr. Michael H. Hart wrote a book titled *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* and to people's surprise, he could only (objectively) see Prophet Muhammad fit to lead the list of the world's most influential persons. See Hart, Michael H. The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History. New York: Kensington Publishing Corp., 2000.p.3.

50. Muslim Bk. 25, No. 5325. Also Prophet Muhamad had said, "Name yourselves by my name. . . ." See Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 207; Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 216; Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 217.
* Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said: "I have many names, I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am Maahi (the one who erases-eradicates) through whom Allah has eradicated kufr (Disbelief). I am Haashir, whom Allah will raise first on the day of Qiyama (Resurrection Day), the whole Ummah (Nation) will be judged before my feet on the day of Qiyama. I am 'Aaqib (the one who comes last), and that 'Aaqib, after whom there shall be no other nabi (Prophet)." See Tirmidhi Chapter 51, Hadith No. 1 (360).

51. Brown, Laurence B. MisGod'ed: A Roadmap of Guidance and Misguidance in the Abrahamic Religions. USA: BookSurge Publishing, 2007.p. 219.

Mis'Goded or any scholarly work on textual criticism such as the best-seller *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* by the world renowned Bible scholar, Bart D. Ehrman. Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was the recipient of the 1994 Phillip and Ruth Hettleman Prize for Artistic and Scholarly Achievement. For more about Ehrman, visit his website, www.bartdehrman.com. From *Jesus, Interrupted*, Bart D. Ehrman writes:

> Scholars have made significant progress in understanding the Bible over the past two hundred years and the results of their study are regularly and routinely taught, to both the graduate students in universities and to prospective pastors attending seminaries in preparation for the ministry. Yet such views of the Bible are virtually unknown among the population at large. As a result, not only are most Americans (increasingly) *ignorant* of the contents of the Bible, but they are also almost completely in the dark about what scholars have been saying about the Bible for the past two centuries.[52]

Another statement that might send shockwaves is that of Professor John Rogerson of Sheffield University, in *The Expository Times*, 113/8, p.255: "Most congregations are kept in *ignorance* of the findings of biblical criticism."

Regarding the Qur'anic verse affirming that the Gospel predicted the coming of Muhammad, it is worth educating the fact that in the Bible, there is the word *paraclete* (from the Greek *parakletos*) which can mean "helper, defender, mediator, consoler." It may be by coincidence or by design that "the word Paraclete occurs *only five times* in the Bible, and all five occurrences are in the purported writings of St. John: 1st Epistle of John 2:1; and the Gospel according to John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7."[53] Another observation that beseeches amazement is the fact that, also in the Qur'an, Prophet of Islam is mentioned by name *only five times* (Q 3:144; Q 33:40; Q 47:2; Q 48:29 and Q 61:6). This may be food for reflection.

Balqis' son at the age of one year and two months

Balqis is not the only lover of Muhammad, the Messenger of God. *The Times* reports that "Muhammad is now second only to Jack as the most popular name for baby boys in Britain and is likely to rise to No 1 by next year, a study by *The Times* has found."[54] And in January 2005, an article in *The Guardian* stated that: "In Brussels, Mohammed has been the most popular name for

52. Ehrman, D. Bart. Jesus Interrupted. Front Flap. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009. ; Also see "Cover Content From the Publisher." bartdehrman.com. Retrieved on 25 Nov. 2009. <http://www.bartdehrman.com/books/jesus_interrupted.htm>

53. New Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol 10, p. 989.

54. Nugent, Helen and Nadia Menuhin. "Muhammad is No 2 in boy's names." The Times 6 June 2007.

boy babies for the last four years."[55] Besides, in *Religion on the Rise*, Hofmann declares: ". . . for years now, "Muhammad" has been the name most frequently given to baby boys in France." [56]

Back to Balqis' story. I forgot to mention that Balqis did French at Alliance Française in Nairobi. Also, she is about to be a CPA (K), which is obtained by passing all the six sections of the Certified Public Accountants (CPA) exams administered by Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board (KASNEB). Having passed section five, Caroline is planning to sit for Section six exams as soon as possible. Besides engaging in a perpetual study of Islam, she is also doing some private studies in Arabic. She has greatly progressed to an extent of saying, "No one can now say things in Arabic behind my back."

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Balqis says her son Muhammad is a blessing from God

Michael Wolfe

Besides being the President and Executive Producer of Unity Productions Foundation, Michael Wolfe (Born 3 April 1945, United States) is the author of books of poetry, fiction, travel, and history. He is also a frequent lecturer on Islamic issues at universities across the United States including Harvard, Georgetown, Stanford, SUNY Buffalo, and Princeton. He holds a degree in Classics from Wesleyan University.

55. Browne, Anthony. "The Triumph of the East." The Guardian 27 Jan. 2005.

56. Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.p. 183.

He had a foot in two religious camps for he was born to a Christian mother and Jewish father, having the opportunity of celebrating both Hanukkah and Christmas. He writes:

> My father had been a Jew; my mother Christian. Because of my mongrel background, I had a foot in two religious camps. Both faiths were undoubtedly profound. Yet the one that emphasizes a chosen people I found insupportable; while the other, based in a mystery, repelled me.

His immense travel experiences and zeal for books exposed him to Islam and could not resist the gravitation pull towards the religion of Islam. One of the reasons which made him find Islam appealing is his discovery that Islam was compatible with his desires. He writes:

> I could not have drawn up a list of demands, but I had a fair idea of what I was after. The religion I wanted should be to metaphysics as metaphysics is to science. It would not be confined by a narrow rationalism or traffic in mystery to please its priests. There would be no priests, no separation between nature and things sacred. There would be no war with the flesh, if I could help it. Sex would be natural, not the seat of a curse upon the species. Finally, I did want a ritual component, daily routine to sharpen the senses and discipline my mind. Above all, I wanted clarity and freedom. I did not want to trade away reason simply to be saddled with a dogma. The more I learned about Islam, the more it appeared to conform to what I was after.

Michael Wolfe became a Muslim at age 40, after wrestling with various beliefs for 20 years. Although, it suffices to perform Hajj once in a lifetime, Mr. Wolfe, in his bid to reap more Godly rewards, performed Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) not less than three times, his first Hajj being in 1991. Seeing the relevance of Islam and the ignorance of some people about the wholesomeness of Islam, Michael found necessary to write:

"My father had been a Jew; my mother Christian . . . Both faiths were undoubtedly profound. Yet the one that emphasizes a chosen people I found insupportable; while the other, based in a mystery, repelled me."

> My politicized friends were dismayed by my new interest. They all but universally confused Islam with the machinations of half a dozen Middle Eastern tyrants. The books they read, the new broadcasts they viewed depicted the faith as a set of political functions. Almost nothing was said of its spiritual practice. I liked to quote Mae West to them: "Anytime you take religion for a joke, the laugh's on you". Historically a Muslim sees Islam as the final, matured expression of an original religion reaching back to Adam. It is as resolutely monotheistic as Judaism, whose major Prophets Islam reveres as links in a progressive chain, culminating in Jesus and Muhammad. Essentially a message of renewal, Islam has done its part on the world stage to return the forgotten taste of life's lost sweetness to millions of people. Its book, the Qur'an, caused Goethe to remark, "You see, this teaching never fails; with all our systems, we cannot go, and generally speaking no man can go, further.

While talking to correspondent Bob Faw about his adopted new faith, Mr. Faw hurled this question to Mr. Wolfe: "Because you did become a Muslim, are you a different person now?" Mr. Wolfe responded: "Yes, I think so. That texture that was missing so often in my life is there now. I feel it." Wolfe found the Islamic notion that every person faces God alone, without middlemen, very appealing:

> The idea that there is the potential for conversation between you and the divine and that it does not require any intermediary, doesn't require a special building to go to or a special person to talk to. That whole notion is very appealing to me.

Michael Wolfe is most well known for his documentary on ABC's Nightline which aired on April 18, 1997 called *An American in Mecca.* The program was nominated for Peabody, Emmy, George Polk, and National Press Club Awards. It won the annual Media Award from the Muslim Public Affairs Council. Michael Wolfe co-created, co-produced, and co-executive edited a two-hour television documentary film on the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad called *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet.* The film received a national broadcast on PBS and subsequent international broadcasts on National Geographic International. The film was awarded a Cine Special Jury Award for Best Professional Documentary in its category of People and Places. During the making of the film, the crew had to do in-depth research on the life of Muhammad. Michael Wolfe admitted that he personally read *Ibn Kathir* and number of contemporary *seerah* (Biography of Muhammad) authors. In fact, there was a good number of Americans who converted to Islam after watching the documentary. In an interview, *Islam Online* asked Mr. Wolfe how much he had gained from the exercise of preparing a documentary on Muhammad and he responded declaring:

> I've learned much more about Muhammad than I ever knew before we started, although in some sense my study of him may only have started. There is so much to understand. I've also seen a lot more of the American Muslim community during the making of this film. I have a much better feeling for who Muslims are and how we are doing here. It's a real eye opener and, for an American born here, it is a very exhilarating thing to have direct access to people from so many different places, language groups and perspectives. It's one of the treasures of being a Muslim.

In a different interview, Michael Wolfe, as one of the filmmakers of *Muhammad: The Legacy of a prophet*, stated:

> The lack of mainstream American understanding about my faith always surprises me. Although Islam is America's fastest growing religion, many American's attitudes about Islam are shrouded in stereotypes, misconceptions and, occasionally, even outright hostility. They know very little about the prophet who founded my religion or what Islam's basic beliefs are. The politics and social customs of the Middle East and the threat of terrorism have overwhelmed a clear understanding of the faith. Considering that the largest Muslim population is not even in the Middle East, but in Indonesia, these perceptions are a real distortion.

Other films co-produced by Wolfe are *Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain* and *Prince Among Slaves.* Moreover, Wolfe has been featured on many radio talk shows. He writes an occasional column called *"From a Western Minaret"* for the Web journal *Beliefnet.com.*

Wolfe's published works incorporate *The Hadj: An American's Pilgrimage to Mecca.* New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1993. [Paperback: 352 pages] a first-person travel account; *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage* New York: Grove Press, 1997. [Paperback: 656 pages], an anthology of 10 centuries of travelers writing about the Muslim pilgrimage; and *Taking Back Islam: American Muslims Reclaim their Faith* (Rodale Press, Pennsylvania, 2003. [Paperback: 256 pages]. Some of the awards he received include Lowell Thomas Award, "Best Cultural Tourism Article, 1998"; Marin County Arts Council Writers Award, 1990, and 1983; California State Arts Council Writers Award, 1985. Michael Wolfe was declared a winner of the 2003 Wilbur Award for best book of the year on a religious theme. He lives at the end of a tucked-away cul-de-sac in Santa Cruz.

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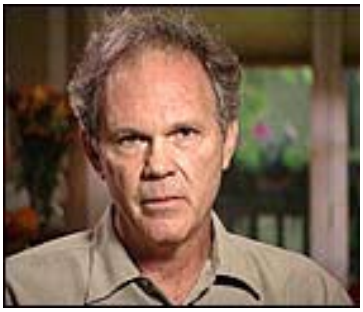

Michael Wolf in prayer

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Elizabeth [Safia Al-Kasaby]

"I just felt like God was there"

~ Elizabeth recalling her visit to a mosque just before her conversion.

On September 11, when the twin towers crumbled before the eyes of onlookers, to Elizabeth, the tragedy cost her eight relatives; one uncle and seven cousins.

The 43 year old American Elizabeth, a former sergeant first class in the Air Force National Guard, has a Jewish and Puerto Rican ancestry. Elizabeth holds a bachelors degree. Raised by her grandparents in Puerto Rico, Elizabeth grew up in a home of melded cultures and faiths. Her grandfather was a Jew, who fled Germany during the Holocaust. Her grandmother was Catholic. Elizabeth ultimately chose Judaism, a faith she believed was her birthright.

Judaism eventually let her down and she found Islam in 2005 on the third day of a Moroccan vacation. "I just felt like God was there," she said, recalling her visit to a mosque during the call for prayer. Without hesitation, she said "this is it. I believe there is only one God. His name is Allah, and his messenger is Mohammed." Elizabeth changed name to Safia.

Safia's family didn't take her seriously. Some of her colleagues at her banking job were filled with shock and surprise. Sylvia, Safia's eldest daughter berated her. Her hijab brought much stares from people. However, Safia's 12-year-old daughter Natalia says that her mother's religion is cool. And her other daughter, Ada, 20, appreciates Safia's transformation and doesn't tolerate people who make fun of Islam or stereotype Muslims. "I say, 'Wait a minute. My mom's a Muslim," Ada said. "She's not a terrorist."

Elizabeth (left) with her daughters.

Safia went to the Islamic Society of Tampa Bay Area and asked to renew her *shahadah*, the formal declaration of the Islamic Creed.

"I just never hated Islam. I never hated Muslims. For me to be angry about what happened to the twin towers would be like me hating all the Germans that killed the Jews."

Realizing that Safia was out of work, the Imam of Tampa Bay Area gave her a job of managing the society's office. The group also stocked her refrigerator and paid her rent and electricity bill.

She has been learning about her religion on Web sites and Islamic chat rooms. She studies the Qur'an and prays five times a day. She married a man from Morroco. The former Elizabeth, now Safia Al Kasaby, lives in Tampa, Florida. When confronted about her embracing Islam despite losing eight of her own relatives in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, Safia replied:

> I just never hated Islam. I never hated Muslims. For me to be angry about what happened to the twin towers would be like me hating all the Germans that killed the Jews.

Dung Pham gives Safia Al-Kasaby(right) a manicure at Modern Nails in Town 'N Country as a preview of World Trade Center is shown on TV.

Safia Al-Kasaby, right, and her daughter, Natalia Torres, 10, hang out at home.

Contact Information:

Sherri Day covered an article about Safia Al-Kasaby in *St. Petersburg Times*.Sherri Day can be reached at:

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[**References:** Day, Sherri. "*Faith's friction: Tampa woman who lost eight relatives in the attacks converts to Islam*" St. Petersburg Times. 8 Sept. 2006; *"Aljazeera: Jewish And Catholic Women enter Islam After 9/11"* youtube.com 29 July 2007. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=As8RKqEUOPQ>]

Lord Headley al–Farooq

" The intolerance of one sect of Christians towards other sects holding some different form of the same faith, of which I witnessed many instances, disgusted me"

~ Lord Headley al-Farooq

Lord Headley al-Farooq (Rt. Hon. Sir Rowland George Allanson) was born in 1855 C.E. and was a leading British peer, statesman and author. He was educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge. Thereafter, entering Middle Temple, before commencing studies at King's College London. He was Secretary to Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, M.P., for several years and in 1892 he took up Civil Engineering as a profession, becoming a builder of roads in India, and an authority on the protection of foreshores. As Assistant Engineer to Spedding & Co., Lord Headley was responsible for the construction of the Baramula-Srinagar Road in India which was 33 1/3 miles long and included 167 culverts and bridges. He was twice awarded the Bessemer Premium of the Society of Engineers as also the Silver Medals of the Royal Scottish Society of Arts and of the Institute of Civil Engineers of Ireland. He was later elected President of the Society of Engineers, London. He became a peer in 1877, served in the army as a captain and later on as Lieut. Colonel in 4th Battalion of North Minister Fusiliers.

Being practitioner of boxing, as well as other arts of self defence, Headley co-authored, with C. Phillips-Wolley, the classic *Broad-sword and Singlestick (*1890). He also authored "*Boxing: With Prefatory Note by Bat Mullins"* [Paperback: 129 pages] which was reprinted in 2006. While in college, Headley had won both the heavy-weight and the middle-weight Championships. He was also fond of fishing, rowing, skating, swimming, fencing, shooting and golf. He was one time the editor of the *"Salisbury Journal",* a local newspaper for the Salisbury area of England founded in 1729.

After embracing Islam on 16 November 1913, Headley adopted the Muslim name of Shaikh Rahmatullah al-Farooq and established the British Muslim Society in 1914 becoming its president. "Those who know me will believe I am perfectly sincere in my belief," wrote Lord Headley in a letter read at the meeting during his reversion. Lord Headley al-Farooq had authored several books on Islam, notable ones being *A Western Awakening to Islam* [145 pages], *Three Great Prophets of the World* [116 pages] and *The Affinity between the Original Church of Jesus Christ and Islam* [156 pages]. He made pilgrimage to Makkah twice. In fact, he is uniquely known to be the first Western pilgrim to Mecca. Among the experiences any pilgrim faces, including Lord Headley, are: facing the scorching heat of Arabia, for ten days dressed in two single white sheets, going round the Kaabah seven times, sleeping for four nights on the ground without a bed and availing oneself on mount

Arafat from morning to evening. These and many other hardships Lord Headley endured for the sake of God. The Lord was a widely travelled man and he visited India in 1928. He had also visited Egypt for the cause of Islam and during his stay at Cairo, he visited the famous Muslim Azhar University. In Alexandria, after paying a return visit to H.H. Prince Tusan, he called at the palace of H.M. King Fuad. Lord Headley dedicated many efforts for the spread of Islam. His *proselytizing* zeal was manifested when on Monday 22 of February 1926, Lord Headley accompanied by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din visited South Africa for religious preaching. He has also succeeded in raising funds for building a Mosque in London. The biggest donation was $300,000 which was solicited by Lord Headley from the Nizam of Hyderabad & Berar, world's richest man in 1940's having a fortune estimated at $ 2 billion. As a member of the aristocracy, Lord Headley mixed with the nobility and royalty of England. He used such occasions to preach Islam. At one time, he spoke on the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in those after-dinner speeches attended by various eminent persons.

Lord Headley (centre) at Kaaba performing hajj with Khawaja Kamal Deen (left) and Abdul Mohy (right), an Arab companion.

The reasons and rationalities behind his reversion to Islam are briefly written by Lord Headley himself:

> It is possible some of my friends may imagine that I have been influenced by Muslims; but this is not the cause, for my present convictions are solely the outcome of many years of thought. My actual conversations with educated Muslims on the subject of religion only commenced a few weeks ago, and need I say that I am overjoyed to find that all my theories and conclusions are entirely in accord with Islam . . . . I say 'better Christians' (i.e. Muslims) advisedly, because charity, tolerance and broad-mindedness in the Muslim faith come nearer to what Christ himself taught than do the somewhat narrow tenets of the various Christian Churches . . . . In the present day men are prone to become atheists when asked to subscribe to dogmatic and intolerant beliefs, and there is doubtless a craving for a religion appealing to the intelligence as well as to the sentiments

of men. Whoever heard of a Muslim turning atheist? There may have been some cases, but I very much doubt it. There are thousands of men -- and women, too, I believe -- who are at heart Muslims, but convention, fear of adverse comments, and desire to avoid any worry or change, conspire to keep them from openly admitting the fact. I have taken the step, though I am quite aware that many friends and relatives now look upon me as a lost soul and past praying for. And yet I am just the same in my beliefs as I was twenty years ago; it is the outspoken utterance which has lost me their good opinion. Having briefly given some of the reasons for adopting the teachings of Islam, and having explained that I consider myself by that very act a far better Christian than I was before, I can only hope that others will follow the example -- which I honestly believe is a good one -- which will bring happiness to anyone looking upon the step as one in advance rather than one in any way hostile to true Christianity.

". . . I have taken the step (of publicly converting to Islam), though I am quite aware that many friends and relatives now look upon me as a lost soul and past praying for."

It is worth mentioning that Lord Headley was brought up as a Protestant but he had as well studied Roman Catholicism and was struck by what he called their "believe-this-or-be-damned" attitude. On one occasion, he said:

It is the intolerance of those professing the Christian religion, which more than anything is responsible for my secession. I was reared in the strict and narrow forms of the Low Church party. Later, I lived in many Roman Catholic countries, including Ireland. The intolerance of one sect of Christians towards other sects holding some different form of the same faith, of which I witnessed many instances, disgusted me . . .

Lord Headley inherited his peerage (noble rank) from his cousin in 1913 and in 1921, he married the Australian author Barbara Baynton. In 1925, Lord Headley was offered the throne of Albania, along with $500,000 and $50,000 per year but refused it. From 1929 Lord Headley owned and lived at Ashton Gifford House near the village of Codford in Wiltshire. Lord Headley died in London on 22 June 1935 at the age of 80.

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Dr. Kari Ann Owen [Penomee]

"I support and deeply admire Islam's respect for same sex education, for the rights of women as well as men in society, for modest dress"

~ Kari Ann Owen

Kari Ann Owen is a San Francisco Bay Area writer, singer, modern dancer and digital illustrator, and a scholar of Holocaust and genocide studies and tragic literature. She is a doctoral level scholar with a Ph.D. in religion and literature from Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union. She is primarily a playwright whose subjects range from AIDS (*Terms of Surrender*) to *Eagle to the Sun*, which portrays a Native North American biker's struggle for sobriety. Her plays have been produced in staged readings and productions in Boston; New York; Boulder, Colorado and the San Francisco Bay Area. A short play on Vietnam, *An Exact Quality of Light*, won the American Theatre Association's National Award in 1983, and was presented in Minneapolis at the ATA's annual conference. An expanded version of this play was staged in San Francisco at both the Marsh Theatre in July 1993 and at the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House in April 1994. Kari Ann's recent prose publications include an article on playwriting and disability in the *The Dramatist Guild Quarterly*; recent poetry publications include *Tribal Fires.*

Before founding Wildhorse (a horseback riding center), Kari Ann spent two and a half years as an instructor at Cornerstone Equestrian Center, a therapeutic riding center in the Napa Valley. She began teaching in the summer of 2001. Kari Ann Owen is a Certified and Registered Instructor for the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association. Living in the San Francisco Bay Area, she is the widow of Silas S. Warner (1949–2004), who was the maker of the original *Castle Wolfenstein*. Silas S. Warner was a San Francisco Bay Area scientist and science fiction writer.

Kari's birthmother's ancestors were Spanish Jews who lived among Muslims until the inquisition expelled the Jewish community in 1492. Her name Penomee, meaning "she who rides the roads" was given to her by Native North American people.

Kari Ann Owen's journey to Islam began when she started to learn of an Ottoman caliph's humanity toward Jewish refugees at the time of her ancestors' expulsions. Due to God's decree, she was taught about Islam by figures as diverse as Imam Siddiqi of the South Bay Islamic Association; Sister Hussein of Rahima; and her beloved adopted Sister, Maria Abdin, who is Native American and Muslim and a writer for the SBIA magazine, *IQRA*. Kari's first research interview was in a *halal* butcher shop in San Francisco's Mission District, where she met the first Muslim lady: a customer in Hijab, who behaved with a sweet kindness and grace and also read, wrote and spoke four languages.

Kari Owen was attracted to the beauty of Islam through the behavior and words of the Muslim men and women. She of course converted to Islam. She once wrote:

> If we follow the path of Islam, we stand a good chance of raising children who will be free from the violence and exploitation which is robbing parents and children of safe schools and neighborhoods, and often of their lives . . .

Annoyed by the moral disillusionment of the society, Kari Owen (Penomee) says, "I looked to Islamic Culture for Moral Guidance."

Perhaps, her obsession to Islam is manifest in this testimony she gave:

> . . . I support and deeply admire Islam's respect for same sex education, for the rights of women as well as men in society, for modest dress, and above all for sobriety and marriage, the two most profound foundations of my life, for I am 21 1/2 years, sober and happily married. How wonderful to feel that one and half billion Muslims share my faith in the character development marriage allows us, and also in my decision to remain drug and alcohol-free. What, then, is Islam's greatest gift in a larger sense?

"For I am 21 1/2 years, sober and happily married. What, then, is Islam's greatest gift in a larger sense?"

In one of her articles, she wrote:

> I implore those who call themselves Muslims, Christians, Jews or anything else while committing irreligious acts to have mercy on the hope religion offers . . . particularly Islam, which is providing help to many young men and women in the West seeking a disciplined life of sobriety, education, sexual and moral responsibility leading to that victory one may call oneness with Allah and others merely call responsibility, or grace.

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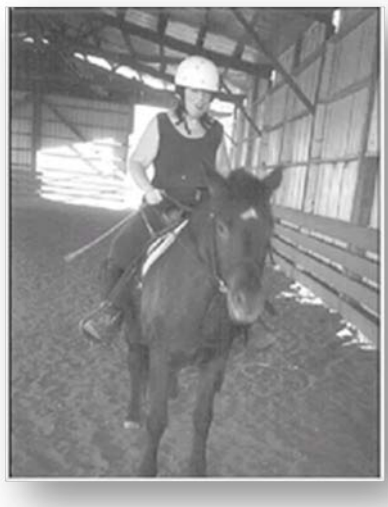

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Jermaine Jackson

"When I came back from Makkah I got him (i.e. Michael Jackson) a lot of books and he asked me lots of things about my religion (Islam) and I told him that it's peaceful and beautiful. He read everything and he was proud of me that I found something that would give me inner strength and peace. I think it is most probable that Michael will convert to Islam."

~ Jermaine Jackson

Jermaine Jackson is the brother to pop superstars Michael Jackson, Janet Jackson, as well as Rebbie Jackson, Jackie Jackson, La Toya Jackson, Marlon Jackson, Tito Jackson, and Randy Jackson. He was born as Jermaine LaJuane Jackson on 11 December 1954, Gary, Indiana, USA. Born to parents Joseph and Katherine Jackson, Jermaine became the original lead singer of an earlier incarnation of *The Jackson 5* until 1967 when younger brother Michael assisted lead vocals but Jermaine would co-lead with Michael for many years. In 1997, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of *The Jackson 5*. He is an American Grammy Award-winning singer as he was nominated for the Grammy Award for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance for his 1979 album *Let's Get Serious*. He is also a bass guitarist, songwriter, dancer and producer. In 1992, Jermaine Jackson, Margaret, and Suzanne de Passe produced *The Jacksons: An American Dream*, an award-winning and highly-rated miniseries about the history of *The Jackson 5*. Jermaine, Jr. portrayed his father as a young teenager in the miniseries. Jermaine graduated from Birmingham High School in 1973, where the yearbook showed that he was elected "most talented" and "best dressed". He was raised in Indiana as Jehovah's Witnesses.

He lives in one of the luxurious palaces in the outskirts of Los Angeles (USA). His palace is surrounded by beautiful gardens, always under surveillance of more than 15 security vans round the clock. The area he lives, Falis, is considered one of the most expensive areas.

Jermaine reverted to Islam in 1989 after meeting Ali Gamber's family in Bahrain. He was impressed by this Muslim family, especially the children were so respectful and peaceful. He realized that it was Islam that made the children the way they were. Searching for spirituality, Jermaine went to Jeddah with his friend Ali where he reverted to Islam and changed name to Muhammad Abdul Aziz. Jermaine has performed *Umrah* (lesser pilgrimage) and had shown a strong desire to go for Hajj. "Umrah was the most wonderful experience and my life changed for the better since then . . . I felt God's presence and felt complete," he said. His family did not object to his conversion for they saw a better Jermaine who was very loving, very kind and very giving. On 13 February 2007, Virgin Media, in an interview, asked Jermaine what made him revert to Islam. "I

just found in Islam the answers to things which I'd failed to find in Christianity and as I say, there's a peace and respectfulness about the religion which suits me." Jermaine replied. You can watch him on *YouTube* being interviewed about his reversion to Islam. Use the following link to access the video-recorded interview:

< http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ptaaNEgw1I&feature=related>

In a different interview published by London based Arabic *al-Majallah* Jermaine Jackson said: "Islam unknotted many complications for me." When asked about his feelings after proclaiming Islam, Jermaine answered:

> Having embraced Islam, I felt as if I were born again. I found in Islam the answers to those queries which I had failed to find in Christianity. Particularly, it was only Islam that provided satisfactory answer to the question relating to the birth of Christ. For the first time I was convinced about the religion itself. I pray my family members might appreciate these facts.

"I just found in Islam the answers to things which I'd failed to find in Christianity and as I say, there's a peace and respectfulness about the religion which suits me."

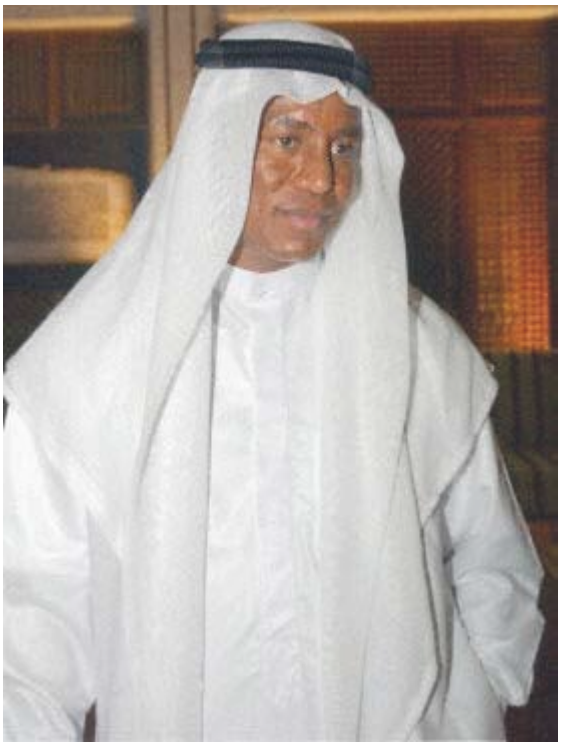
Touching on Muslim women he had to reveal that:

> To my view, the women in an Islamic society is just like a well-protected flower which is safe from the stray penetrating looks of the viewers. Whereas western society is devoid of the vision to appreciate this wisdom and philosophy.

In 2007, Jackson commented about Islam to BBC Asian Newtwork saying, "There's a strength and protection there (i.e. in Islam)." When he visited UK, Jermaine had this message for youths:

> My word to young Muslims around the world, especially here in the UK, is be proud as to who you are, stay focused, do your prayers, fast and don't fall short to the worldly things because together we are strong. We should live according to God's will, according to the way Allah wants us to be. There are going to be trials and tribulations but at the same time true Islam is so strong that it overcomes all of the false accusations and don't ever deny who you are. Be proud and stand up and say it loud that 'I am a Muslim'. That's what I felt when I was in the Big Brother house. I wanted the world to know this is who I am and this is what has kept me strong.

Jermaine married his second wife, Halima Rashid from Afghanistan, in 2004. They alternate living between Los Angeles and the Middle East. He has a home in Bahrain "It's a very peaceful place, the people are very respectful and I love the sunshine. This cold English weather tends to chill my bones!" Jermaine said. Currently, Jermaine lives in Los Angeles with his second wife Halima Rashid but travels frequently to London & Bahrain. Jermaine Has eight children: Jermaine Jr., Autumn, Jaimy, Jeremy, Jourdyn , Jaffar, Jermajesty and Dawn.



Jermaine Jackson has appeared on many TV programs including CNN's *Larry King Live*. In April 2007, Jermaine returned to the UK to take part in a one-off special of ITV's Challenge *Anneka*. On the same trip he appeared in Glasgow with British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, speaking in support of *Searchlight* magazine's anti-racism campaign, the *Daily Mirror* "Hope Not Hate bus".

Jermaine has been active on philanthropic planes. He founded *Earthcare International* to help children around the world who are disabled and less fortunate. Even though his focus has been on Africa with the HIV/AIDS problem, they are also concerned about disadvantaged and disabled people no matter where they are. Among other countries, he has visited Bangladesh as part of his work to raise funds and help children. He has appeared on the *Islam Channel* in the UK where he talked about his Islamic faith as well as announcing several charity projects that he plans to undertake. In March 2008, Jermaine was the guest of honour at the Muslim Writers Awards in Birmingham, where he was interviewed live on stage by chat show host Sajid Varda which received rave reviews.

On 21 November 2008, an article entitled, "The way you Mecca me feel" in *The Sun* came with the following report:

> Michael Jackson has become a Muslim — and changed his name to Mikaeel. The skint superstar, 50, donned Islamic garb to pledge allegiance to the Koran in a ceremony at a pal's mansion in Los Angeles . . . . An Imam was summoned from the mosque and Michael went through the shahada, which is the Muslim declaration of belief. Mikaeel is the name of one of Allah's angels. Jacko rejected an alternative name, Mustafa — meaning the chosen one.

Websites:

www.jackson5abc.com/jermaine
www.jackson-source.com/jermaine.htm
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Michael Jackson in silhouette

Jermaine Jackson (Left) and sister LaToya

The late Michael Jackson

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Nicole Aeschleman

During the Santa Clara University School of Law Graduation ceremony on May 21, 2005, Nicole Aeschleman was among the many grinning new graduates. Nicole Aeschleman is (now) a 27-year-old lawyer who reverted to Islam in 2004 after emerging from a six-month partying spree--getting drunk and dating men. Admitting that such a life can't bring happiness, she says, "It was not a good time."

Nicole baptized an Episcopalian adopted the Islamic Faith and married Nabil Michraf, a soft-spoken Moroccan studying in France. The two met during a summer law course in Strasbourg, France. They struck up a friendship, started to correspond through e-mails and Nicole began inquiring about Nabil's religion. She reverted out of her own conviction without Nabil's insistence. "He never tried to convert me—which was one of the reasons why I eventually did," she says. Later, Aeschleman flew to Nice for a face-to-face meeting with her e-mail pal—and the two fell in love. "I just realized he was the most amazing man," she says.

The couple wed in March. Drafting her own marriage contract in consultation with Muslim legal scholars—she added provisions that she can divorce Michraf should he ever try to forbid her from working, going to school, studying Islam—or should he ever take additional wives, as permitted by the religion.

"He never tried to convert me—which was one of the reasons why I eventually did"

Her parents were in complete shock on hearing that she embraced Islam. Her father did not speak to her for a while, though they are now on good terms. Aeschleman has given up some of her previous lifestyles. She no longer celebrates Christmas, and she never leaves her hair uncovered.

Nicole Aeschleman has worked at her law firm, McManis, Faulkner & Morgan. She has also worked as an Attorney at Law Office of Nicole L. Aeschleman, Attorney at Law Offices of Stuart Fishman (Sole Proprietorship) and as a Research Assistant at Santa Clara University Law Review.

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Loon, the former Bad Boy artist

"I need a girl"

~ Loon's song before his conversion to Islam

His stage name is Loon, his birth name Chauncey Lamont Hawkins, and his Islamic name is Amir Junaid Muhadith. Loon was born on 20 June 1975 in Harlem, 'The Home of hustlas and money makers' and attended the prestigious "Beverly Hills High School" where his classmates included Angelina Jolie, Monica Lewinsky, the Menendez brothers (Lyle and Erik who murdered both of their parents with a shotgun and were later sentenced to life in prison without parole). And of course, Loon was raised a Baptist.

Loon evolved from the ghettos of Harlem, to street-hustling and to the rap world where he became part of P. Diddy's Bad Boy Records. In addition, he has performed songs with notable artists such as 50 Cent, Jermaine Dupri, Usher, Snoop Dogg, Missy Elliott, Jamie Foxx, Ginuwine, Busta Rhymes, Faith Evans, Toni Braxton, Alicia Keys, Lenny Kravitz among others. Loon enjoyed global audiences and there was no country he could go without people recognizing who he was. Loon has also involved himself in acting and has appeared in films like "Happy Hour," "State Property 2" and "Death of a Dynasty." This is a guy whose materialistic ambition is captured in his statement: "I'm gonna get money. I'm from Harlem. Ours is a 24/7 hustle. Gimme an inch, I'm taking a yard. Gimme a rope, I'm a cowboy. . . ." Some of his records are: "I Need A Girl (Part One)" P. Diddy featuring Usher & Loon); I Need A Girl (Part Two)" , P. Diddy & Ginuwine featuring Loon, Mario Winans & Tammy Ruggeri; "I Do Wanna Get Close To You", 3LW featuring P. Diddy & Loon; "Hit The Freeway", Toni Braxton featuring Loon. Indeed, bad boy is not for life, and as a matter of fact, all religious scriptures tell us that all bad boys will not enter the kingdom of heaven. In 2004, Loon ended his relationship with Bad Boy and founded his own label, Boss Up Entertainment. With all the fame and the bling bling, there was one thing that was abundantly elusive: Loon could not purchase peace.

"[I'm] happy to be accepting Islam and finding the peace of mind I was always searching for in the music business . . . Thanks to Islam I was able to complete my search and now I'm very much at peace. Bad Boy days are over, I'm now what you call a good boy."

Loon left all those lifestyles and embraced Islam in December 2008 whilst on tour in Dubai, UAE. How did he come to Islam? The thing that drove him to Islam was just the *adhan* (Islamic call to prayer) he heard while touring in Dubai. He says that the *adhan* was more beautiful than any song he has ever written in his life. The call for prayer which was recited in the most beautiful, melodious

and captivating way from Mosques' loudspeakers made him study its background, meaning and significance. Studying about Islam, he would sometimes go to bookstores to buy books on Islam; sometimes he would ask questions to people of authority of Islam and at the end of it, Loon thought that it is the smartest decision to embrace Islam. Oh yes, the other thing that attracted Loon to Islam is the way Islamic acts of worship are consistently done in a unswerving formula. "Everyplace I went (in the Muslim world)" Loon says, "I could see one consistent practice and worship of one true God . . . this is something that I want to be part of, because (in the non-Muslim world) there are a lot of inconsistencies in the way people practice and worship but what I saw in the Muslim (world) was very consistent."

Loon (Left) with P.Diddy (Centre) and Busta Rhymes (Right).Busta is also a convert to Islam.

Since his reversion to Islam, Loon has appeared in various TV and Radio interviews such as on Al Jazeera TV, Al-Shahed T.V, Kuwaiti T.V, The Deenshow and on Talk Radio Show. "Islam brought peace that I couldn't find in my life," Loon vibrantly exclaimed in an interview with Eddie of the Deenshow. Fellow Muslims may tell this brother who needed a girl that if, he strictly adheres to Islam, God will not only give him numerous virgins in Heaven, but he can now have four wives on this transitory planet called Earth. In Islam, you are not restricted to just one marital partner, the 'I-need-a-gal' mentality is automatically supplanted with 'I-need-wives' mindset. Just before the end of an interview, Eddie of Deenshow submitted the following question to Loon: "What advice do you have for those who are trying to mimic the hip-hop phenomenons and the people in your positions?" Since Loon has been in that field, I think it is respectful for the music-lovers to heed the advice he gave:

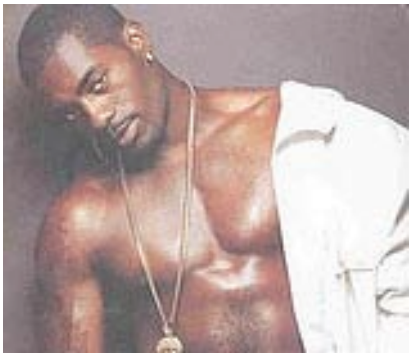
> If you trying to incorporate a love for music just be mindful that there is a lifestyle that comes with the music that kind like destroy the whole positive effort of trying to exercise the love for music … you can't have one without the other, you do the music you are going to indulge in the lifestyle that come with the Music. And the lifestyle itself is definitely something you don't want to get involved with. It draws the guts out of you, it draws everything that is pure inside of you, it removes the peace of mind that you might been having before coming into the business….Take my advice.

Currently, Loon grasps any opportunity to learn more about Islam, on one interview with Sheikh Nabil Al-awadh in Kuwait, Loon could recite, from memory, the first chapter of the Qur'an. Being an experienced singer, Muslims anticipate that he may one day be one of the world's Qur'an top reciters. One of his messages on Twitter was: "My quest for knowledge has just gone into overdrive. May Allah guide us all to seeking the knowledge of Islam!" His seriousness into Islam is manifested in his adoption of Prophet Muhammad's model of life by keeping a full beard. In addition, he has already performed an important Islamic ritual known as *Umrah* (lesser Hajj) which is a visitation to Makkah to perform certain rituals of worship. But what's amazing is that he has become 'better in speech' by taking an initiative of calling upon music addicts to abandon such a distressing life, by calling upon non-Muslims to read about Islam, by calling upon Muslims to strictly adhere to their religion, by calling people to the religion of Allah. And of course we may wonder if, by becoming a God's spokesman, he is not better in speech then "who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah, and does righteousness and says, "I am one of the Muslims."?"[Q 41:33] Or should he go back to the hip-hop world and glorify killing, violence and (pre-marital) sex? To those who are enslaved with music and its lifestyle, they got to hear Loon's message which was aired by AlShahid TV:

> The Music lifestyle was overbearing and overwhelming for me. To be removed from that lifestyle, I would be a fool to return back to the place which I was guided from. In that case, anyone who is involved in Music. . . to the Muslims knowing that the Qur'an teaches us that Music is Haram (i.e. Prohibited by God), I was saying to those who are struggling with this matter (i.e. Music) to try to refrain and invest more time and energy reading and extracting emotions from the speech of Allah which is in the Qur'an.

However much you are loved or revered, the moment you decide to change for the good, you will be sure of becoming a public enemy just in an overnight. Some of Loon's fans were not an exception. But one big-picture thinker posted the following message on worldstarhiphop.com in order to silence the detractors and boast up Loon's motivation "As-Salaamu Alaikum brother Amir (i.e. Loon)!" the comment read, "and Salaams to all the other brothers and sisters out there! There are alot of ignorant people on here bashing what they have no knowledge of! If you know nothing of Islam please don't speak on it!" Junaid Muhadith (formerly Loon) is now writing a book whereby he would document his life and his transition to Islam. "[I'm] happy to be accepting Islam," said Loon, "and finding the peace of mind I was always searching for in the music business . . . Thanks to Islam I was able to complete my search and now I'm very much at peace. Bad Boy days are over, I'm now what you call a good boy."

From Loon to Amir



From the rap-artist Loon, to the a humble, devout Muslim

Loon (left), to the right of the picture is the American rapper Freeway. Freeway is also a convert to Islam. He is best known for his tenure on Roc-A-Fella Records and his affiliation with Jay-Z and Beanie Sigel.

"Change We Can Believe In"

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Lim Bee Ping

Lim Bee Ping (centre) with officers from the Islamic Da'wah Centre who performed the conversion ceremony at Pusat Ehsan in Bengkurong.

Lim Bee Ping is a Chinese woman and a business Manager at Harpers Trading (S) Pte Ltd. In 2007, at the age of forty-two, Lim Bee jumped from being faithless to being a Muslim and changed name to Aisha Maisarah Abdullah. The conversion ceremony took place at Multipurpose Hall of Pusat Ehsan in Bengkurong.

Her older sister had converted to Islam 20 years before her and Lim Bee took six months to really think about it. She studied people as they went along their lives, how they dressed and how they talked, and especially when they discussed matters pertaining to Islam.

She told *The Brunei Times* that she was certain that she did not make a wrong decision as even her family readily accepted her choice.

Aisha's conversion ceremony was made extra special by the presence of the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs. Performing the ceremony were officials from the *Islamic Da'wah Centre* while another two volunteers from those attending served as official witnesses to the conversion.

[**References:** Nasroul Hizam "Chinese woman embraces Islam." The Brunei Times 24 Nov. 2007]

Keith Ellison

Keith Maurice Ellison, an American lawyer and politician was born in Detroit, Michigan, August 4, 1963. He is the first African American Muslim ever elected to the United States Congress after winning the open seat for Minnesota's 5th Congressional District. That puts him to be the first Muslim Congressman in American history.

Keith Ellison, the third of five sons, was born and raised a Roman Catholic in Detroit, Michigan by his parents Leonard and Clida Ellison, a psychiatrist and a social worker respectively. Congressman Ellison graduated from Wayne State University in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. He moved to Minnesota in 1987 to attend the University of Minnesota Law School where he earned his law degree in 1990. Keith and his wife, Kim

a high school math teacher, have since made Minnesota their home where they are raising their four children. His wife is not a Muslim, but their four children are being raised as Muslims. Upon completion of his Juris Doctor, Congressman Ellison practiced law from 1990 to 2006 in both the private sector and as executive director of the Legal Rights Center. In 2004 he ran for the State Legislature from Legislative District 58B in North Minneapolis.

"The Holy Qur'an is the scripture that I read every day and it's the book that I draw inspiration from . . . ."

It was at the age of nineteen, while attending Wayne State University in Detroit, when Ellison embraced the religion of Islam and his adopted name became Keith E. Hakim. He said he was inspired by reading *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and by friendships with fellow students who were practicing Muslims. Keith says that he adheres to the religion's more moderate Sunni branch and follows Islamic law in his personal life. Keith Ellison once told an interviewer, regarding the Qur'an saying:

> The Holy Qur'an is the scripture that I read every day and it's the book that I draw inspiration from, but all the religious stuff is going to be less important than those bread-and-butter issues that people care about every day.

Back to how he won the seat in congress. When long-serving 5th District Congressman Martin Sabo announced his retirement after 28 years in Congress, Ellison jumped into the race. Ellison, a state representative and criminal defense lawyer had to face great challenges before he could be the winner of the open seat for Minnesota's 5th Congressional District. Minneapolis voters were 65 percent white and 18 percent black with Muslims accounting for 20,000 of the 2.5 million residents in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Furthermore, he was challenged in the DFL primary by six candidates. He told *Voice of America* in an interview:

> . . . I do hope that if we win, *inshallah* (God Willing), in November, that it will signal to Muslims that we should engage in the American political system. It will signal to people who are not Muslims that Muslims have a lot to offer to the United States and the improvement of our country.

However, Somalis who reside in America have also helped Keith Ellison defeat his election rivals. In a victory speech to supporters, Ellison said "Tonight, we made history. We won a key election, but we did much more than that. We showed that a candidate can run a 100% positive campaign and prevail, even against tough opposition." His election has "huge symbolism", says Larry Jacobs, a professor of political science at the University of Minnesota. "It's very interesting that Minnesota would be the first state to send a Muslim to Congress," he told *Voice of America*. During his oath reenactment Ellison used a two volume Qur'an published in London in 1764 that was once owned by Thomas Jefferson and loaned to Ellison by the rare book and special collections division at the Library of Congress. A book that was owned by Thomas Jefferson, a towering figure of American democracy! The third President of the U.S., and the author of the Declaration of Independence! Ellison said:

> It demonstrates that from the very beginning of our country, we had people who were visionary, who were religiously tolerant, who believed that knowledge and wisdom could be gleaned from any number of sources, including the Qur'an.

As far as swearing by the Qur'an, Ellison clarified to his critics that no representative actually swears on *any* religious book -- the oath is sworn upon the Constitution, and the Bible has traditionally been used only for a photo-op afterward. He also silenced his critics by pointing out that there is a legacy of religious pluralism in the United States.

Ellison served on the House Financial Services Committee, and the House Judiciary Committee.

Keith Ellison taking oath of office on Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an.

US Representative Keith Ellison and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi were photographed holding a copy of the Qur'an once owned by Thomas Jefferson

Mr. Ellison's legislative priorities are promoting peace, prosperity for working families, environmental sustainability, and civil and human rights. He is remembered in U.S. history as the first African American elected to the Congress from Minnesota, as well as the first Muslim American to be elected to the U.S. Congress. Other elected officials in the United States include the United States ambassador to the United Nations, Zalmay Khalilzad, State Del. Saqib Ali (D-MD), State Senator Larry Shaw (D-NC), State Rep. Saghir "Saggy" Tahir (R-NH) and Congressman André Carson (D-IN). These are the known elected Muslim officials in the United States of America as of 2008. Shortly before the 110th Congress convened, Ellison told a media group:

> I just want to say it's a great day. We have a lot of work to do for this country to set it in the right direction. We need to set it on a course of peace. We need to correct this colossal mistake in Iraq. But after we correct that mistake, we've got to be about diplomacy, negotiation and good international relationships, as opposed to military domination of anyone we're scared of.

On 20 February 2007, Ellison endorsed the 2008 presidential campaign of Senetor Barack Obama saying, “He speaks with a unifying spirit.” And that he supports Obama’s message of an open and fair economy, a balanced prosperity and clear opposition to the war in Iraq.

U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison at Minnesota for Obama Rally, Peavey Plaza, Minneapolis

Since his 2006 election, he has become active in advocacy for Islamic causes on a national level. On 24 December 2006 Ellison spoke at a convention held at Dearborn, Michigan for the Muslim American Society and the Islamic Circle of North America. The convention offered workshops and panels about civil rights, political engagement, and proselytizing. Ellison talked to the 3,000 in attendance saying:

> Muslims, you’re up to bat right now. . . . How do you know that you were not brought right here to this place to learn how to make this world better? How do you know that Allah, *subhanahu wa ta’ala* (praised and exalted is He) did not bring you here so that you could understand how to teach people what tolerance was, what justice was? How do you know that you’re not here to teach this country?

Ellison spoke about how he and his staff have faced the difficulties brought out by the Qur’an Oath Controversy of the 110th United States Congress:

> We had faith in Allah. And we patiently endured this adversity. And facing adversity bravely and with patience in the faith in Allah is an Islamic value. That’s what it means to be a Muslim . . . . We’re going to continue to face them (i.e. more challenges). They’re not going to stop right away. But if you, and me too, stick together, if we believe in Allah, if we turn to the Qur’an for guidance, we’ll find an answer to the questions we have. And we will find that we are an asset and a plus not only to our own community, but to this country, and to this whole world . . . . You can’t back down. You can’t chicken out. You can’t be afraid. You got to have faith in Allah, and you’ve got to

stand up and be a real Muslim . . . . Before you begin to think that some hardship has befallen you, you need to stop and thank Allah. Because this controversy (over the Qur'an oath) has (benefited America because it) . . . made people dust off their Constitution and actually read it.

Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) was keynote speaker at the Muslim Youth Leadership Symposium, hosted by the Chicago office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

With the election of Obama as the President of America, Ellison had once said that qualified American Muslims should apply for some of the 8,000 jobs he said are available now in the incoming Obama administration. He says that today - with a new U.S. president sporting "Hussein" as his middle name - there is no excuse for shying away from work because of an accent or a foreign name.

In an interview, it was asked: "I've read that you're devout. You pray five times a day. You will plan on continuing to do that in the House (of Congress)?" Keith answered with a big "sure". Ellison prays at Masjid An-Nur, a mosque in Minneapolis. Imam Markram El-Amin said Ellison attended the mainstream Muslim services as often as he can. And when asked if he has plans to go to Mecca (for Hajj)? "Absolutely" was the reply Keith gave. Hence 2008 Hajj became a historic event because, for the first time, Keith Ellison, an American Congressman was among the pilgrims who made their way to Mecca, where he was one of many thousands who performed the ceremonial walk around the Kaaba, the black cube located in the Grand Mosque. About his experience at Makka, he told CNN, as paraphrased: "You forget who you are -black or white and American or African -and where you come from when you are before God circling the Kaaba in a two-piece unstitched garment." In this memorable journey, Ellison was not worried of any potential danger for he traveled mainly with fellow members of his Minneapolis mosque without security guards and with absence of media coverage. Commenting on his hajj which was very simplistic, he said: "We weren't really trying to turn this

into a political thing. This is just me trying to be the best person I can be." Ellison who called the hajj experience "transformative" will go down the history as the first member of Congress to perform the Hajj. "It was an amazingly transformative experience. I'll never forget it. Three million people, from every inch of the globe, all getting along together in a world where there's a lot of turbulence," he said. Among the people he met include the vice president of Bosnia and a former Saudi deputy oil minister and humble street cleaners. He also met the Minister of Hajj Dr. Fouad bin Abdul Salam Al Farsi, at his office. During the meeting, Ellison expressed thanks and appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Sultan for the care and attention given to the American pilgrims who performed the Hajj in that year (2008).

Keith Ellison is Minnesota's first black congressman to visit Kenya. On 4 July 2008, Ellison was given a warm reception at the U.S. ambassador's residence in Nairobi, Kenya, where he met Sarah Hussein Onyango Obama, the grandmother of the then presidential candidate Barack Obama. While in Kenya, he met the deputy speaker of the Kenyan Parliament, Mr. Farah Maalim and other officials. And of course, he became the first American congressman to pray at Jamia Mosque in Nairobi.

In a letter sent to hundreds of voters, Representative Virgil H. Goode Jr., Republican of Virginia, warned that the recent election of the first Muslim to Congress posed a serious threat to the nation's traditional values. In his letter, which was dated 5 December, Mr. Goode said that Americans needed to "wake up" or else there would "likely be many more Muslims elected to office and demanding the use of the Koran." He said *"I fear that in the next century we will have many more Muslims in the United States . . . ."*

Jamia Mosque Committee chairman Muhammad Osman Warfa presents a kofia to Keith Elllsion during his visit to Jamia Mosque in July 2008.

Keith Ellison and Obama

Maybe Professor Ali Mazrui will give us food for thought in his article where he wrote:

> In 1968 Senator Robert Kennedy was startlingly prophetic when he envisaged the election of a black US president by 2008. He said things were "moving so fast in race relations that a Negro could be president in 40 years . . . there is no question about it". Bobby Kennedy of course did not have a specific name in 1968 for that first black president. The boy born in Hawaii was only seven when the prediction was made. Now at last we do have a name for that history-making black president. Is it time that somebody else made another prediction of equal historical weight? If we now have a president whose father was a Muslim and who was himself born a Muslim and whose middle name is Hussein, perhaps we can prophesize that in another 40 years the US will at last have a Muslim president. If by 2050 America does have the first Muslim president, that leader would be the most powerful Muslim in history. A Muslim occupying the Oval Office would have immense power for doing good as well as evil."[57]

[Dr. Ali A. Mazrui is a distinguished Kenyan scholar. He is now Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities and Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at Binghamton University, State University of New York. He is also Albert Luthuli Professor-at-Large at the University of Jos in Nigeria. He is Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large Emeritus and Senior Scholar in Africana Studies at Cornell University. Dr. Mazrui has also been appointed by Kenya's Head of State as Chancellor of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Kenya]

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http://ellison.house.gov

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Susan Carland

"It (Islam) looked violent, sexist and foreign"

~ Susan Carland on Islam.

What will you do if your beloved mother tells you "I don't care if you marry a drug dealer, but don't marry a Muslim?" This is exactly what was told to Susan Carland when she was 17-years-old after declaring that one of her New Year's resolutions was *"to investigate other religions."* Of course, Islam was not in her priority list for as she use to say "It looked violent, sexist and foreign." Two years later, at the age of 19, Susan who has been raised as a Baptist became a Muslim without the influence of any man! This was the same girl who at around 14 years of age had joined a "funky, happy, clappy church" that was part of the charismatic movement. Around her, people were claiming to speak in tongues and announcing that God had spoken to them in the night.

One night her mother announced they were having pork chops for dinner. That was when the mother discovered that her daughter had become a 'victim' of Islam. "My mother gave me a hug," she recalls, "but she was crying." A few days later, Susan began wearing a headscarf.

"I felt the sense of intellectual liberation . . ."

For eight years, after the conversion to Islam, there had been a rift between Susan and her mother. However, they are now in good terms. Susan says: "Now, my mum even buys me head scarves and sends presents to my children for Eid." Susan had found that Islam, ". . . didn't have that intellectual divide between mind and body and soul that I had found in Christianity." Carland also converted to Islam because she found that "the nature of God in Islam . . . appealed to me," she says.

Susan has completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Science and in 2007 she was completing her PhD, researching leadership challenges facing Western Muslim women. She is now a lecturer and a tutor in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University in Melbourne, where she specializes in gender studies, youth and sociology of religion. She has come to love Islam and Muslims, "Without doubt," she says, "the most inspiring, wonderful people I've ever met in my life are Muslims and that's certainly helped me not withdraw from the community altogether".

In February 2002 at a ceremony in Melbourne Zoo, Susan got married to Melbourne lawyer Waleed Aly, who is on the executive of the Islamic Council of Victoria. Born in Australia to Egyptian parents, Waleed has degrees in law and engineering and works for a big city law firm. Waleed Aly is now a lecturer in politics at Monash University and works at the Global Terrorism Research Centre. In 2006, Waleed was one of 90 young Australians chosen to attend the Australian Future Directions Forum to generate ideas for the next twenty years of Australia's future. And in 2007, he was named one of The Bulletin magazine's 'Smart 100'. He is also the author of *People Like Us: How arrogance is dividing Islam and the West.* The couple have a daughter named Aisha. Susan converted to Islam independently of Waleed as she says, ". . . when I became Muslim Waleed and I weren't together. I was very much a single woman and us sort of deciding to get married happened years after I became Muslim."

Susan, her husband, Waleed Aly and kids

Susan is a creator and panelist on the multi-award winning Australian national network television program *Salam Cafe*, and is often consulted for commentary about Islam and Muslims in a variety of mainstream media. Susan has been invited to speak at various churches, Jewish groups, schools, community groups, and business organizations, and was invited to give the International Women's Day address at the Victorian Parliament house in 2003. Besides being a researcher for the Centre for Muslim Minorities and Islam Policy Studies at Monash University, Susan is also a youth worker with *Grassroots*, an initiative of the Islamic Council of Victoria, which aims to address and serve the specific needs of young Australian Muslims. Susan is a state-coordinator for the *Train the Trainers Course* in Dawah and Dialogue. In 2009, she was named one of the international 'Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow' by the UN Alliance of Civilisations.

While recalling her spiritual quest, Susan said:

> I felt the sense of intellectual liberation . . . . I started going to Muslim internet chat rooms…I was put in contact with Muslim women who were studying at my university who patiently answered my question . . . when I let the religion speak for itself through its traditions, scholars and holy text, as opposed to taking the words of tabloid journalists or appallingly behaving Muslims, I found a faith that was peaceful, egalitarian, socially just, and with a beautiful balance of the spiritual and the intellectual . . . .

Susan Carland was proclaimed the Australian Muslim of the Year 2004, a prize worth $2000 to be distributed to charities of her choice which she accepted on two conditions: that she would spend the money in Australia and give to non-Muslim as well as Muslim organizations.
You can watch her on any of the following internet links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-baqULx5IBU>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hipM0UiqTHI>
<//www.turntoislam.com/forum/showthread.php?t=1360)

The last link is a short film that was made by Sister Verity P. (a non-Muslim) but then Verity says: "It was the first film I ever made, I converted to Islam shortly after making it."

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Part 1.3

My Favorite Conversion Story

"And when affliction touches man, he calls upon Us (i.e. God), whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove from him his affliction, he continues [in disobedience] as if he had never called upon Us to [remove] an affliction that touched him. Thus is made pleasing to the transgressors that which they have been doing." [Q 10:12]

"Kiss the hand of him who can renounce what he has publicly taught, when convicted of his error and who, with heartfelt joy, embraces the truth, though with the sacrifice of Favorite opinions."

~ Johann Kaspar Lavater

Why My Favorite Story

In my unfathomable research on conversions to Islam, I was greatly overawed by a story of a unique man called Laurence Brown. I really didn't want to mention this but I shed tears while reading his story (when a man cries, know it's serious). I decided to pick his story as the best conversion story I ever read. Maybe there is something in his story that is very common with my life drama . . . (to be revealed in future writings).

Brief Bio of Dr. Laurence Brown as it appears in His Website

A product of Christian-American ancestry dating back to the year 1677, up until his conversion to Islam in April of 1994, Dr. Brown easily could have passed as an example of a man who lived the stereotypical American dream. A graduate from two Ivy League universities with subspecialty training in ophthalmology, Dr. Brown served as a respected ophthalmologist in the U.S. Air Force for a period of eight years.

Midway through his Air Force career, Dr. Brown's 'ideal American family' included a wife, two children, and the requisite two cars and a dog. His country home was crowded with the full array of comforts and toys which clutter the lives of those preoccupied with materialism. Yet Dr. Brown ended up sacrificing virtually everything he had worked for when he faced a religious conviction that overturned his lifelong priorities. Following a personal miracle through which the life of his daughter was saved, Dr. Brown redirected his focus to religious study in an attempt to make good on a promise made to God. In the process, Dr. Brown followed the chain of revelation through the Abrahamic religions from Judaism to Christianity and, in the end, to Islam. It is the result of that study that he relates in this series of thought-provoking books.* In the same manner that Dr. Brown's choice of religion confronted his slice of the American dream, so too do his religious conclusions challenge the Western religious establishment.

*Laurence Brown's ground-breaking, can't-put-down books include *MisGod'ed: A Roadmap of Guidance and Misguidance in the Abrahamic Religions*; *God'ed: the Case for Islam as the Completion of Revelation*; *Bearing True Witness (Or, "Now that I've Found Islam, What Do I Do With It?")* and *The Eighth Scroll*. They are all must-reads.

Laurence Brown received his B.A. from Cornell University, his MD from Brown University Medical School, and his ophthalmology residency training at George Washington University Hospital in Washington, DC. His immediate family presently consists of his wife, three daughters, and an ever changing assortment of parrots and hamsters.[58]

Dr Laurence Brown's Conversion Story as he narrates it

Having repeatedly been asked about how I became Muslim, and why, I have decided to tell the story one last time, but this time on paper. However, I feel conversion stories are worthless unless related with the lessons learned, and it is with those lessons that I intend to begin.

No doubt, there is a certain fascination with conversion stories, and for good reason. Frequently they involve dramatic life-altering events, sufficient to shock the convert out of the materialistic world and into the spiritual. Those who experience such life dramas are brought face to face with the bigger issues of life for the first time, forcing them to ask the 'Purpose of Life' questions, such as 'Who made us?' and 'Why are we here?' But there are other common elements to 'conversion' stories, and one of them is that the convert is humbled to his or her knees at such moments, and looking back, most relate having prayed with sincerity for the first time in their lives. I have been intrigued by these commonalties, and have noted some significant lessons. The first, I would say, is that most converts who passed through these moments of trial and panic prayed directly to God, without intermediary, and without distraction. For example, even those who spent their lives believing in the Trinity, when faced with catastrophe, instinctively and reflexively prayed directly to God, and never to the other proposed elements of the Trinity.

Let me relate a story as example. A popular television evangelist once had a lady relate her 'Born Again' Christian conversion story, which revolved around a terrible boat-wreck, from which she was the sole survivor. This lady related how during her days and nights of survival against the harsh elements of the open ocean God spoke to her, God guided her, God protected her, etc. You get the idea. For maybe five to ten minutes she told her tale, which was indeed dramatic and captivating, but throughout the story she related how God did this, God did that, and seeking His favor, she prayed to God and to God Alone. However, when she was saved by a passing ship, she described how the minute she landed on the ship's deck she threw her arms open to the heavens and yelled, "Thank you, Jesus."

Well, there is a lesson there, and it relates to sincerity. When in the panic and stress of circumstance, people instinctively pray to God directly, but when conceiving themselves safe and secure they frequently fall back into previously held beliefs, many (if not most) of which are misdirected. Now, we all know that many Christians equate Jesus with God, and for those who would like to argue the point, I just suggest they read my book on the subject, entitled *The First and Final Commandment* (Amana Publications).* For all others, I would just continue by saying that the real question is 'Who truly is saved?' There are countless convert stories, all telling how the God of this or that religion saved the person in question, and all of these converts conceive themselves to be upon the truth by nature of the miracle of their salvation.

58. <http://www.leveltruth.org/about.asp > Retrieved 15 April 2009.

* *The First and Final Commandment* has now been rewritten in two separate books; *MisGod'ed* and God'ed.

But as there is only One God, and therefore only one religion of absolute truth, the fact of the matter is that only one group can be right and all others are living in delusion, with their personal miracles having confirmed them upon disbelief rather than upon truth. As Allah teaches in the Holy Qur'an, "Allah leaves astray whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him]" [Q 13:27] and "So those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him – He will admit them to mercy from Himself and bounty and guide them to Himself on a straight path." [Q 4:175] As for those astray in disbelief, they will be left to stray, as they themselves chose.

But the strength of belief, even when misdirected, is not to be underestimated. So who is going to become Muslim based upon my conversion story? Only one person -- me. Muslims may find some encouragement in my story but others may be left empty, just as Muslims sigh and shake their heads in despair when hearing others relate the 'miracles' which followed prayers to patron saints, partners in the Trinity, or other distractions from the One True God. For if a person prays to something or someone other than our Creator, who, if not God, might be the one answering those prayers? Could it just possibly be a certain one who has a vested interest in confirming those who are astray upon their particular flavor of disbelief? One whose dedicated purpose is to lead mankind astray?

However a person chooses to answer those questions, these are issues addressed at length in *The First and Final Commandment,* and those interested can investigate. But for now, I will tell my story.

In the winter of 1990, when my second daughter was born, she was whisked from the birthing room to the neonatal intensive care unit, where she was diagnosed with a coarctation of the aorta. This meaning a critical narrowing in the major vessel from the heart, she was a dusky gunmetal blue from the chest to the toes, for her body simply was not getting enough blood and her tissues were suffocating. When I learned of the diagnosis, I was shattered. Being a doctor, I understood this meant emergency thoracic surgery with a poor chance of long-term survival. A consultant cardio-thoracic surgeon was called from across town at the pediatric hospital in Washington, D.C., and upon his arrival I was asked to leave the intensive care unit, for I had become overly emotional. With no companion but my fears, and no other place of comfort to which to go while awaiting the result of the consultant's examination, I went to the prayer room in the hospital and fell to my knees. For the first time in my life I prayed with sincerity and commitment. Having spent my life as an atheist, this was the first time that I even partially recognized God. I say partially, for even in this time of panic I was not fully believing, and so prayed a rather skeptical prayer in which I promised God, if, that is, there was a God, that if He would save my daughter then I would seek and follow the religion most pleasing to Him. Ten to fifteen minutes later, when I returned to the Neonatal ICU, I was shocked when the consultant told me that my daughter would be fine. And, true to his assessment, within the next two days her condition resolved without medicine or surgery, and she subsequently grew up a completely normal child.

Now, I know that there is a medical explanation for this. As I said, I am a doctor. So when the consultant explained about a patent ductus arteriosis, low oxygenation and eventual spontaneous resolution, I understood. I just didn't buy it. More significantly, neither did the Intensivist – the Neonatal ICU specialist who made the diagnosis. To this day I remember seeing him standing, blank-faced and speechless. But in the end, the consultant was right and the condition spontaneously

reversed and my daughter, Hannah, left the hospital a normal baby in every respect. And here's the rub -- many who make promises to God in moments of panic find or invent excuses to escape their part of the bargain once the danger is past. As an atheist, it would have been easy to maintain my disbelief in God, assigning my daughter's recovery to the doctor's explanation rather than to God. But I couldn't. We had cardiac ultrasound taken before and after, showing the stricture one day, gone the next, and all I could think of was that God had made good on His part of the deal, and I had to make good on mine. And even if there were an adequate medical explanation, that too was under the control of Almighty God, so by whatever means God chose to effect His decree, He had answered my prayer. Period. I did not then, and I do not now, accept any other explanation.

The next few years I tried to fulfill my side of the bargain, but failed. I studied Judaism and a number of sects of Christianity, but never felt that I had found the truth. Over time I attended a wide variety of Christian churches, spending the longest period of time in Roman Catholic congregation. However, I never embraced Christian faith. I never could, for the simple reason that I could not reconcile the biblical teachings of Jesus with the teachings of the various sects of Christianity. Eventually I just stayed home and read, and during this time I was introduced to the Holy Qur'an and Martin Lings's biography of the prophet, Muhammad, entitled, *Muhammad, His Life Based on the Earliest Sources.*

During my years of study, I had encountered the Jewish scriptures referencing three prophets to follow Moses. With John the Baptist and Jesus Christ being two, that left one according to the Old Testament, and in the New Testament Jesus Christ himself spoke of a final prophet to follow. Not until I found the Holy Qur'an teaching the oneness of God, as both Moses and Jesus Christ had taught, did I begin to consider Muhammad as the predicted final prophet, and not until I read the biography of Muhammad did I become convinced. And when I *did* become convinced, suddenly everything made sense. The continuity in the chain of prophethood and revelation, the One-ness of Almighty God, and the completion of revelation in the Holy Qur'an suddenly made perfect sense, and it was then that I became Muslim.

Pretty smart, hunh? No, not at all. For I would err greatly if I believed that I figured it out for myself. One lesson I have learned over the past ten years as a Muslim is that there are a lot of people much more intelligent than I am, but who have not been able to figure out the truth of Islam. It is not a matter of intelligence but of enlightenment, for Allah has revealed that those who disbelieve will remain upon disbelief, even if warned, for in punishment for having denied Allah, Allah in turn has denied them the treasure of His truth. As Allah teaches in the Holy Qur'an, "Indeed, those who disbelieve – it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them – they will not believe. Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil." [Q 2:6-7] But, on the other hand, the good news is that "…whoever believes in Allah – He will guide his heart" [Q 64:11], "Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back (to Him)" [Q 42:13], and "And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path." [Q 24:46]

So I thank Allah that He chose to guide me, and I attribute that guidance to one simple formula: recognizing God, praying to God Alone, sincerely promising to seek and follow His religion of truth, and then, once receiving His mercy of guidance, *DOING IT*.[59]

❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

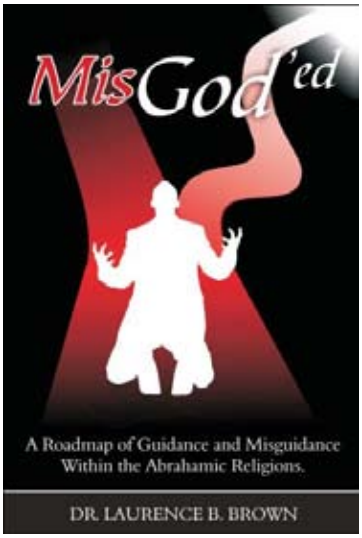
For the eager seeker after the true religion, I would *highly* recommend Laurence Brown's three great books reading them in the following order:

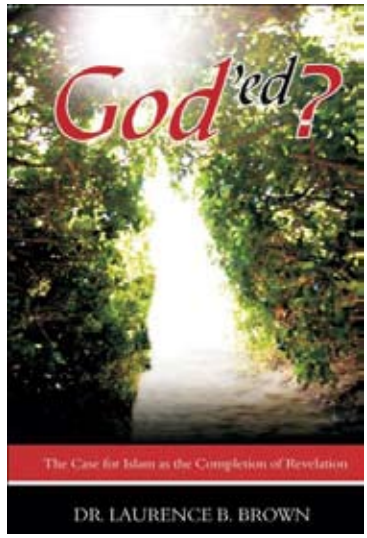
1. MisGod'ed: A Roadmap of Guidance and Misguidance in the Abrahamic Religions [Paperback: 352 pages]

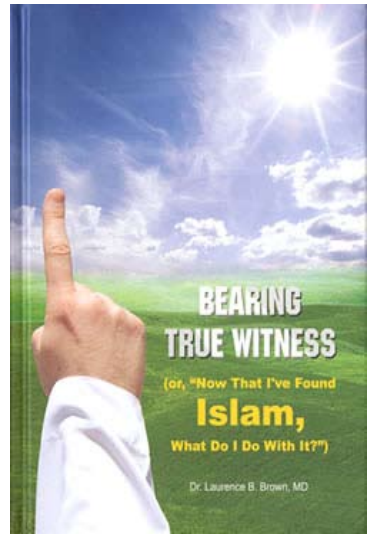
2. God'ed?: The Case for Islam as the Completion of Revelation [Paperback: 344 pages]

3. Bearing True Witness (Or, "Now that I've Found Islam, What Do I Do With It?") [Hardcover: 116 pages]

These groundbreaking, well-researched, unbiased and fact-based masterpieces would provide us with the roadmap to the true religion. Why don't you order them online if the local bookstore has not stocked them? Here are the front covers of the books:







59. Taken from Dr. Laurence Brown's official website: <http://www.LevelTruth.com>

Dr. Brown (right) with Jesse Jackson. Jesse Jackson is an American civil rights activist and Baptist minister. He was a Democratic presidential candidate in 1984 and 1988 and had served as shadow senator for the District of Columbia from 1991 to 1997.

Dr. Brown (left) with Larry Shaw, a Democrat State Senator of North Carolina. Larry Shaw is not only the highest-ranking Muslim elected official in the United States but is also the chairman of the board of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

Dr. Laurence Brown with King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia (centre).

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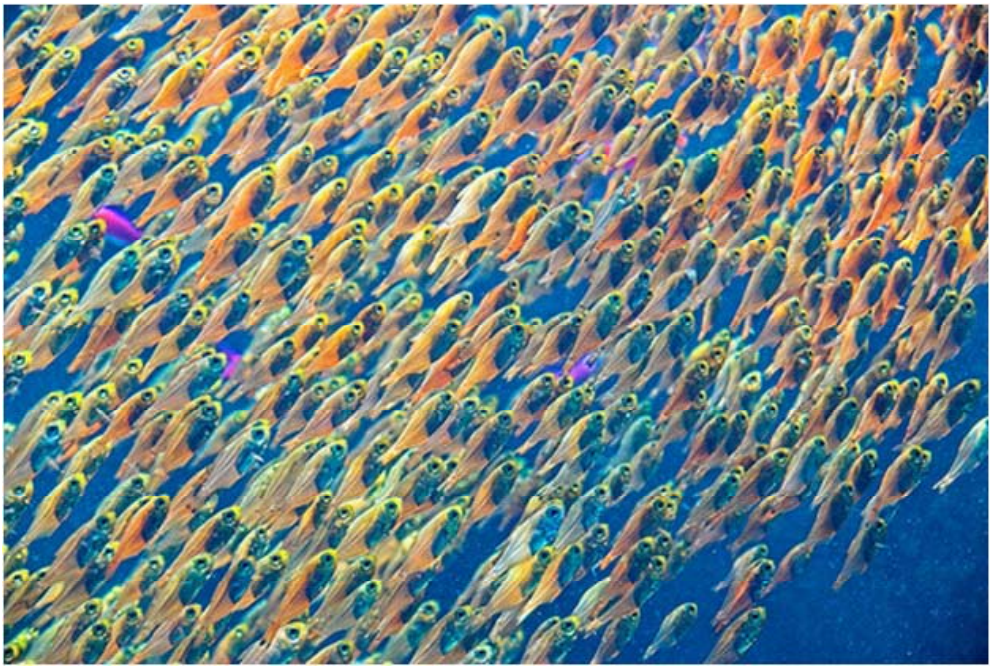
Part 1.4

What other Reverts to Islam Say



"And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes." [Q 110:2] According to a study, people who choose red meat over white meat on a regular basis have a higher chance of dying than those who choose white meat. Qur'an Chapter 16, Verse 14 says: "And it is He (i.e. God) who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat . . . ." Fish is a white meat. From the sea we get fish having tender meat, and probably tender heart.

"First impressions are often the truest, as we find (not infrequently) to our cost, when we have been wheedled out of them by plausible professions or studied actions. A man's look is the work of years it is stamped on his countenance by the events of his whole life, nay, more, by the hand of nature, and it is not to be got rid of easily."

~ William Hazlitt

Impressions of Muslim Reverts

In this part, I shall bring to your attention what these converts to Islam are saying regarding their religious experiences. Brief biographies of the reverts may be provided. To save space and time, we shall highlight few lines of only a small number of the new Muslims.

Abdul Azim (Greogor Shepard)

In Islam I found the real Jesus. As a leader of believers, and a prophet to love as an example. It was Islam that made me love him.

Abdussalam Sipes (Clinto Sipes)

In the Qur'an, there is no hocus-pocus, no spookism, no mysticism, just plain, simple understanding 'Truth'. When I heard the call for prayer, I felt a closeness to God that penetrated my heart and soul.

Ahmed Holt

British Civil Contractor, traveler in search of the Divine truth, spent much of his time in research and comparative study of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He embraced Islam in 1975. Contact Info: Ahmad Holt, 23 Welland Garden Perivale, Middlesex UB6 8SZ, U.K.

The Sword of Islam is not the sword of steel. I know this by experience, because the sword of Islam struck deep into my own heart. It didn't bring death, but it brought a new life; it brought an awareness and it brought an awakening as to who am I and what am I and for what am I here?

Alfonse Etienne Denier

The artist who embraced Islam and chose the Islamic name of Nasiruddin.

> *The religion of Allah is one. Islam came to corroborate the previous divine messages and correct the distortions which had befallen them at the hands of the priests. The Holy Qur'an is now the only divine book which has not been distorted and will never be distorted or tampered with. Allah has promised to keep it intact as He is its guardian.*

Ali Selman Benoist

Doctor of Medicine from France.

> *The essential and definite element of my conversion to Islam was the Qur'an. I began to study it before my conversion with the critical spirit of a Western intellectual . . . . There are certain verses of this book, the Qur'an, revealed more than thirteen centuries ago, which teach exactly the same notions as the most modern scientific researches do. This definitely converted me.*

Ali (Vyacheslav) Polosin

A former Russian Orthodox priest who converted to Islam.

> *Islam is a religion of revolutionaries.*[60]

Aminah Vanderdrift

> *I came to know that Muslims believed in all the previous prophets, the miraculous birth of Jesus (pbuh), that there is no need for a mediator, that Jesus (pbuh) is a prophet and that there was another Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). I found that I had discovered all the missing pieces that I had been searching for.*

Angela (Germany Lady)

> *I didn't search and found Islam; Islam has found me. All my life, my beliefs have been closer to Islam than Christianity and then I wondered: "How come I am Christian when I believe in what Islam teaches?" After that my heart knew it was just a matter of time and knowledge until I say my shahada (Declaration of Islamic Faith) . . . .*

60. Yasmann, Victor. "Russia: Slavic Converts To Radical Islam Pose New Threat." rferl.org 25 Aug. 2006. <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1070836.html>

Bogdan Dopanski (now Bogdan Ataullah Kopanski)

Originally Polish, now American; has a Ph.D. in history and politics; had a very interesting journey to Islam and faced severe hardships; was imprisoned twice by the Polish communist regime (1968, 1981-82). He embraced Islam in 1974. Contact Info: Bogdan Ataullah Kopanski, 3013 Harrel Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75051.

> *When I was 12 years old I rejected illogical and contradictory faith of the Church. Two years later in 1962 - I was fascinated by victorious struggle of the Algerian Muslim mujahideen against French colonialism. It was the first Arrow of Islam . . . . The high school and earliest days of my education in the University, I was a typical example of 'rebel generation' of Reds . . . . My way to the truth of Al-Qur'an was slow and unpaved . . . . In 1974 I visited Turkey, I wrote my M.A. dissertation about Sultan and Caliph Suleiman Kanuni's policy towards the Polish Kingdom. There, I was hit by the most beautiful voice of mankind, the Adhan, the call to prayer. My hair stood up. An unknown powerful force led me to old masjid in Istanbul. There, old smiling Turkish, bearded men taught me Wudhu, ablution. I confessed to tears Shahadah and I prayed my first Salah Maghrib . . . . I swept out the rubbish ideologies . . . . The first time in my life, my mind was relaxed and I felt pleasure of Allah's love in my heart. I was a Muslim . . . .*

Bushra Finch

> *I found myself agreeing with what I was reading in The Qur'an rather than arguing against it. By the time I had finished reading it, I was convinced that I had found something important and meaningful.*

Captain Yahya M.A. Ondigo

Yahya M.A. Ondigo was born in Kenya in a Christian family of the SDA denomination. He grew up in Kisumu where he obtained his primary, secondary and high school education. He later joined Kenya Armed Forces as an Officer Cadet in 1985 and graduated as a Second-Lieutenant in 1986 from Armed Forces College Lanet, Nakuru. He served the military till he rose up to the rank of Captain. From 1989 -1990 Captain Yahya worked with the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in South West, Namibia. He embraced Islam on 6 June, 1990 and thereby taking an early retirement from the military service. The years to follow witnessed Yahya indulging in the seeking of Islamic knowledge. He completed a Bachelor of Science in education majoring in Physics and Chemistry (2003) from the Islamic University in Uganda. He also completed a B.A in Islamic Studies from the same institution. Sheikh Yahya has been preaching and teaching on Islam in mosques, seminars, and institutions of higher learning both private and public. He has also been teaching Chemistry and English Language in both Benadir and Furqan Universities in Mogadishu, Somalia. Sheikh Yahya has also been the Imam of the Main Mosque and Islamic Center

in Seychelles. He has authored ten books on Islam: *Islam and Science: Conflicting or conciliating* [Paperback: 208]; *Forty Hadith on Social Poisonous Habits* [Paperback: 322]; *The Seven Conditions of Shahaadah* [Paperback: 186]; *Muslim-Christian relations: Past, Present and Future* [Paperback: 326]; *My Journey from Christianity to Islam* [Paperback: 87]; *God's blessing to Humanity Part i* [Paperback: 294] ; *God's blessing to Humanity Part ii* [Paperback: 446]; *God's blessing to Humanity Part iii* [Paperback: 336]; *Essential Islamic Studies Book I* [Paperback: 408]; and *Essential Islamic Studies Book iv* [Paperback: 532].

Before becoming a Muslim, Yahya Ondigo had watched about 66 videotapes of Sheikh Ahmed Deedat, a scholar of comparative religion. Yahya recalls ". . . at the end of the four-hour long dialogue (between Ahmed Deedat and experienced Christian missionaries) I was convinced beyond any reasonable doubt in my heart about Islam . . . ." His deep examination of Islam as a religion made him make such a bold comment: ". . . I found that reason, logic and common sense was on the side of Islam." Captain Yahya preached to his family and all of them converted to Islam. He is now married to three wives; one of them is a convert to Islam. For a whole narration about his path to Islam please read his book *My Journey from Christianity to Islam* published by Abu Aisha Stores (2007). Contact details: P.O. BOX 4632-00200, Nairobi, Kenya. Mobile No: +254734853893. Email: yahyaatei@yahoo.co.uk.

> *. . . I and my brothers started questioning certain discrepancies that we felt were not reasonable or logical, for example we always questioned the Pastors on the issues of Trinity, how could Jesus be God and man simultaneously, if Christ was crucified for our sins then why were we still sinning or even why should we seek for repentance if the price had been paid at Calvary by Jesus Christ . . . . All praises be to Allah (s.a.w) Who not only guided me to Islam but also guided my old parents as well as my brothers and sisters and their families, had it not been for His grace and Mercy we would not be Muslims.*[61]

Col. Donald S. Rockwell

U.S.A. Poet, Critic and Author.

> *The universal brotherhood of Islam, regardless of race, politics, color or country, has been brought home to me most keenly many times in my life -- and this is another feature which drew me towards the Faith.*

61. Ondigo, Yahya M. A.My Journey from Christianity to Islam. Nairobi: Abu Aisha Stores, 2007. p. 4 & p.87.

Dr. Grenier

A French national who worked for the French Council of Representatives. Exposing the reasons for his acceptance to Islam, Dr. Grenier said:

> I read all of the *Ayat* (Qur'anic verses), which have a relation to medical, health, and natural sciences that I studied before and have a wide knowledge of. I found that these verses are totally compatible with and give a picture of our modern sciences. Thus, I embraced Islam as it was obvious that Muhammad (was) revealed the absolute truth more than a thousand years ago. Had every specialist, artist or scientist compared those Qur'anic verses to his own specialization, beyond the shadow of doubt he would embrace Islam, especially if he has a sound mentality and goodwill to search for the truth and not a mentally defective person with the intentions of malevolent aims.

Dr Hamid Marcus

> *The logical and fascination style of The Qur'an penetrated deep into my soul. In Islam there is no irrational or unbelievable tenet or anything contradictory to modern science.*

Erin Saumaya Fannoun

> *When I read the Qur'an I cried in joy of finding the truth. I was graduating in microbiology at that time. The description of the embryological process in the Qur'an [unknown at that time] impressed me. Once I was sure The Qur'an is truly from God, I accepted Islam.*

Haj Dr. Abdul-Karim Satio

A Japanese professor of economics who teaches in one of the Japanese universities declared:

> *In Islam the proofs of the existence of Allah are plain and clear and are taken from the depths of life. This indicates the truth. Allah is the truth. This truth, the target of the whole of mankind, is with the Muslims. If it is made available, all mankind will enter the religion of Allah in groups.*

Herbert Hobohm (Aman Hobohm)

German diplomat, missionary and social worker. An intellectual who has been serving the German diplomatic missions in various parts of the world. He worked as a Cultural Attache in the German Embassy in Riyadh. He embraced Islam in 1941. Contact Info: Aman Hobohm, Cultural Attache, P.O. Box 8974, Riyadh 11492, Saudi Arabia.

> *I have lived under different systems of life and have had the opportunity of studying various ideologies, but have come to the conclusion that none is perfect as Islam. None of the systems has got a complete code of a noble life. Only Islam has it; and that is why good men embrace it. Islam is not theoretical; it is practical. It means complete submission to the will of God.*

Ibrahim Khalil (Philobus)

> *I am attracted to Islam's concept of One God. Nothing is like Him. This belief in the Oneness of God librates man from servitude to any human being and this is true freedom. The direct relationship between God and His servants also attracted me.*

Izzat Heath

Before converting to Islam Izzat Heath, (then in 1993 at the age 27) was an evangelical Christian studying at Birmingham Polytechnic before she converted to Islam. Mrs Heath, lives in Birmingham with her family.

> *Back then I believed without questioning the sources, I once tried to convert a Muslim to Christianity and it backfired on me.*[62]

Jennifer Harrell

Jennifer had attended church and Sunday school. After college, she became a Methodist youth minister. And at the age 26, she became a Muslim. She says:

> *. . . I went to church. I went to parties. But I wasn't concerned about heaven or hell. I took it all for granted . . . . When I was a Christian, I never understood why Jesus had to die for my sins. I mean, they're my sins . . . .*[63]

Jim Hacking

Jim Hacking had been training to be a Jesuit priest. Now, he is an admiralty lawyer in St. Louis. He embraced Islam on 6 June 1998.

> *The thing I've always latched to is that there's one God, He doesn't have equals, He doesn't need a son to come do His work* [64]

62.Berrington, Lucy. "Islam sheds its image as purely eastern religion Muslims in the west." The Times 10 Nov. 1993.

63. Hogan, Susan. The Dallas Morning News 3 Nov. 2001.

64. Jodi Wilgoren. "Islam Attracts Converts by the Thousands, Drawn Before and After Attacks." The New York Times 22 Oct. 2001.

Juba Abdullah Ali

> *I'm dealing with kids that are hardy already. I show them the side I came from compared to what I am now in Islam. If it weren't for Islam, I'd have a gun and be ripping off a store somewhere.* [65]

Karen Courtenay

A 61-year-old linguist (as in 2002) who said the *shahadah* (Declaration of Islamic Faith) over the telephone on May 2001.

> *Many Christians express dismay about the Trinity, about the tri-partite God. With Islam, there are no miracles and things you can't understand. Also, the congregational prayer, where everyone prays in a certain way in Arabic and in ritual positions is very powerful. Then there's the social aspect: If you come from a cold, WASP New England culture, the hugging and hospitality you get from Arab sisters is just wonderful.* [66]

Karen Meek

Karen Meek, 33, of Lewisville converted from Atheism to Islam. She said that Islam had a logic to it that she couldn't resist. These were her thoughts before her encounter with Islam:

> *I grew up thinking religion was ridiculous. I didn't believe in God. I had no idea how the universe was created and, frankly, didn't care.*

Karima Slack Razi

A young woman:

> *I had spent my life longing for a truth in which heart would be compatible with mind, action with thought, intellect with emotion. I found that reality in Islam. With that reality came true self-confidence and intellectual freedom.* [67]

Khadija Evans

> *I am convinced that the Qur'an is the Word of God. Things mentioned in the Qur'an were discovered by scientists in the last 100 years. The only one who could have known those things 1400 years ago was God.*

65. Dannin, Robert and Jolie Stahl. Black Pilgrimage to Islam. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. pp. 244-245.

66. Jiménez, Marina. "New Muslims." National Post 19 Jan. 2002.

67. "Testimony of Karima Slack Razi." The True Religion. <www.thetruereligion.org/karimaslack.htm> (22 November 2003).

Lawrence E. Browne

> *Incidentally these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went, forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword.* [68]

Leopold Weiss (Muhammad Asad)

The grandson of an orthodox Rabbi, Leopold Weiss became an Austrian statesman, journalist, former foreign correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The books he authored include *Road to Mecca; Principles of State and Government in Islam; Sahih Bukhari: Early Years of Islam;* and *Islam At The Crossroads*. He was also a translator of the Qur'an. In 1953 he was appointed as Pakistan's plenipotentiary to the United Nations. He embraced Islam in 1926.

> *Islam appears to me like a perfect work of Architecture. All its parts are harmoniously conceived to complement and support each other. Nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking, with the result of an absolute balance and solid composure.*

Leyla Chepchirchir

She was born Viola Chepchirchir on 23 April 1987 in Kericho, the town commonly known as the centre of Kenya's large tea industry. She is the daughter to Isaiah Kibet Cheruiyot and Jennifer Jepkemboi Cheruiyot. Chepchirchir's father works in a management position with James Finlays (K) Ltd, a Kericho-based international tea company which produces 23 million kgs of made tea every year and her mother is currently the principal of Moi Girls High School, Eldoret. The company which her father works in, Finlays Ltd normally provide their employees and their family with benefits such as housing, schooling and medical services meaning that Chepchirchir is one of the beneficiaries. She has completed her ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) qualification course and she was in fact the Top ACCA Student in Kenya, Paper 2.4 – Financial Management & Control. She is currently doing her Bachelor of Commerce Degree at Strathmore University. It was at Strathmore University where, after meeting devout Muslims, she became inquisitive about Islam and consequently, she found herself researching about Islam even on sites such as themodernreligion.com. She read many books including *The Holy Qur'an* and *When the Moon Split*, a biography of Prophet Muhammad written by Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri. Viola Chepchirchir adopted Islam on 5 October 2007 and changed name to Leyla Chepchirchir. She has worked in accounting capacities with KAPA Oil Refineries, Nalin Shah & Co and currently, she is an accountant with Rapid Construction Company Ltd. Her contact address is violachiri@yahoo.com; mobile no: 0724877468.

68. Browne, Laurence Edward. The prospects of Islam. London: S. C. M. press ltd, 1944.

> *"I visited the website www.themodernreligion.com and it is there that I learnt that most of Christianity is based on man made law. The thing that made me believe that I was on the wrong path was about the trinity. I had never really questioned myself on the logic behind it but the articles made such a convincing argument that I began having doubts myself since logically you can't have three different entities that are one at the same time. It was then that I realized and testified in my heart that there is only one God who has no rivals, sons or helpers. . . I would like to encourage those that are interested in Islam or are wondering what it is all about, please do not hesitate as you can only benefit from reading about it."*

Lisa

A 36-year-old sales manager (as in 2002) with blue eyes and honey-coloured hair who has been raised up with Anglican parents. She is happy to have won Muhammad without losing Jesus. She said:

> *I liked the fact that to become a Muslim you don't have to disrespect Jesus. He is still a prophet, just not the son of God, which I'd always struggled with.*[69]

Lord Douglas Hamilton

An English millionaire, who embraced Islam and changed his name to Adil Hamilton.

> *Islam is the one powerful religion which can stand in the way of the waves of atheism and laxity under which the present industrial communities are suffering. Islam attracts many university graduates, particularly those who are burdened and weary of ideological wrangling.*

Maariyah

62 years old (as in January 2006) Perth banker who converted from Catholicism in February 2005 after reading books presenting evidence against the claim that Jesus was the son of God.

> *And I like the feeling of one big family. We call each other brother and sister and we once a week or once a year – we see praying as a privilege, not a duty.*[70]

69. Browne, Laurence Edward. The prospects of Islam. London: S. C. M. press ltd, 1944.

70. Browne, Laurence Edward. The prospects of Islam. London: S. C. M. press ltd, 1944.

Margaret Marcus (Maryam Jamilah)

Maryam Jameelah was an essayist, poet, journalist and author. Born in 1934 as Margaret Marcus, she became a Reform Jewish woman but reverted to Islam on 24 May 1961. Prior to her reversion to Islam, between 1943-1949, Margaret had attended religious instruction at a liberal Reform synagogue and at the Westchester Ethical Culture Society in New Rochelle. And during the winter of 1952-1953, she made a concerted effort to embrace Orthodox Judaism, visiting meetings at the local YWHA, the Orthodox Synagogue in Mamaroneck, and even by attending a meeting of a Zionist youth group, the Mizrachi Hatzair. However, she was rejected. From 1952, Marcus had been studying the Qur'an which made her prefer Islam to Judaism. She states, "Judaism retains its tribal nationalistic character. Because Judaism is still in essence a tribe, it is a closed society. The Holy Prophet directed his message to the whole human race. Therefore Islam is a truly universal, cosmopolitan faith. He (Allah) would never restrict His Truth to a single people. Truth by its nature must be universal!" Margaret Marcus proclaimed her faith in Islam in Brooklyn, New York in the hands of Sheikh Dawud Ahmed Faisal who suggested her to change name to Maryam Jamilah. In May 1962, she emigrated to Lahore, Pakistan after much thought and the encouragement of Pakistani mentor Maulana Sayyid Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, an Islamic scholar and writer with whom she had been corresponding with between 1960 and 1962. Jameelah was married as the second wife of Mohammed Yusuf Khan, a local political figure and a Muslim leader. She bore five children between 1964 and 1972. Maryam is the author of over two-dozen books on Islam. Some of her books are *Islam versus the West*; and *Islam and Orientalism.*

> *The authority of Islamic Morals and Laws proceeds from Almighty God. Pleasure and happiness in Islam are but the natural byproducts of emotional satisfaction in one's duties conscientiously performed for the pleasure of God to achieve salvation. In Islam duties are always stressed above rights. Only in Islam was my quest for absolute values satisfied. Only in Islam did I at last find all that was true, good, beautiful and which gives meaning and direction to human life and death.*

Marmaduke Pickthall

The renowned Englishman of letters, embraced Islam, called himself Muhammad, and whose translation of the meanings of the Qur'an is highly esteemed:

> *Never is there a worldly grace every enjoyed by man greater than that of being happy and content after being guided to Islam by Allah: to see, by the light of Islam, the truths of the world and the Hereafter and to distinguish between right and wrong and the path of happiness from that of misery. I prostrate myself gratefully to Allah, for this great grace He endowed me with, which flooded my being with true happiness and made me stand in the shade of this great fruitful tree which is the tree of Islamic brotherhood and family.*

Marshila Michelangelo

An Italian lady who embraced Islam said:

> *I have found intellect and logic in Islam. I came to find the Muslims believing in Allah and His Apostle who is a human being like them, but among them. He was the one chosen to convey the message of faith to mankind, and recite to them Allah's Book which is their life's constitution, and which manages their affairs so that they can live plainly and happily, cooperating with one another, without false appearances.*

Maurice Bucaille

Dr. Maurice Bucaille is an eminent French surgeon, scientist, scholar and author of *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science: The Holy Scriptures Examined in the Light of Modern Knowledge* and *What is the Origin of Man?* which contains the result of his research into the Judeo-Christian revelation and the Qur'an. It is a unique contribution in the field of religion and science. After a study which lasted ten years, Dr. Maurice Bucaille addressed the French academy of medicine in 1976 concerning the existence in the Qur'an of certain statements concerning physiology and reproduction.

> *It is not the faith in Islam that first guided my steps, but simple research for the truth. This is how I see it today. It was mainly fact which, by the time I had finished my study, had led me to see in the Qur'an a text revealed to a prophet.*

Monica Nur Sammour-Wüst

Raised as a Protestant, this is how she remembers her days of childhood at Sunday School:

> *The teacher told us that God sees and hears everything, but that he sent his son Jesus as an intermediary to the world . . . . I went home and told my mother that if God sees and hears everything, I don't need a mediator. Now, as a Muslim, if I pray for help, I pray directly. Direct communication with God is a basic tenet of Islam.*[71]

71.Berthoud, Jean-Michel. "Putting their faith in Islam." Swissinfo. 14 March 2005.

Neil Sharp

Neil Sharp is a Canadian pilot who reverted to Islam. This is what he declares:

> *Islam is a very practical religion. It offers a lot of intellectual stimulation. The two main concepts of oneness of God and brotherhood of man are something unique about Islam. There is no intermediary between man and his Creator . . . . The Stipulation for prayer five times a day is an effective means of direct communion with Allah the Almighty and the weekly congregation of Juma prayer is a good opportunity for social interaction . . . . It may seem strange to many, especially in the west, that I have embraced a religion that is an anathema to them in the context of terrorism. My answer to such a comment is that Islam as a religion is not to be blamed for terrorism. Islam does not instigate its followers to indulge in terrorist acts. All acts of terrorism have to be viewed in their respective local context.*

Nicole Banks

She is a Mother-of-two (36 years of age as in January 2006), a former optician/retail manager and a former Church of England follower who converted to Islam in 1999, two years after marrying her Egyptian husband. Her travelling experiences in the Middle East and the encounters with Muslims made her admire Islam:

> *For instance, you wouldn't send your parents off to a nursing home. They're looked after in the home by their (Muslim) kids, wives are doing the chores, while grandmothers are looking after the younger children. Whereas here (Australia), you might not see your family from one week to the next. If someone's sick within the community, the other girls will bring food to the house. If somebody has a baby, people will bring food and help clean the house. That feeling of closeness is very much missing in Australian society . . . . Before (Islam), I was a workaholic, six days a week, 10 hours a day, I drank alcohol . . . smoked cigarettes, about a pack-plus a day, partied very hard. Now my days are spent looking after my kids, helping the community, still taking Arabic, Koran and religion classes twice a week.* [72]

Noora Brown

Thirty-three-year-old (as in 2002) Connecticut housewife and mother. Noora Brown was brought up in the Episcopal Church.

> *It (Islam) gave me self-respect, dignity that I hadn't known before. Islam just completely changed my life. I feel happier now. I feel, actually, at peace."* [73]

72. Lampathakis, Paul. "Why Hundreds of Ordinary West Aussies Convert to Islam." The Sunday Times 17 Jan. 2006.

73. "Profile: Muslim Converts." Religion & Ethics Newsweekly Pbs.org. 8 Oct. 2004. Episode no. 806 <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week806/profile.html#>

Nouria

Nouria, (36 years of age as in 1993), embraced Islam in 1974 after finding some verses of the Qur'an in a dustbin. She comes from a Scottish Protestant background and lives in London. She is married to an Egyptian husband.

> *There's no such thing as a Muslim woman on her own, nor a single Muslim parent on her own. Nor a mentally ill woman on her own. If anyone with a commitment to Islam sees you in hijab and you're suffering, they step in and help. That's abnormal in Britain. . . . Everything the feminist movement is aiming for, except abortion and lesbianism, we've got.* [74]

Nuh Brecheen

> *At the moment of my conversion, no angels sang hymns and no beam of light hit me, but I was filled with an enormous sense of peace and hope. I finally found my way.*

Nuh Ha Mim Keller

A former Roman Catholic and an American Muslim translator and specialist in Islamic Law. Born in 1954 in the north-western United States, he studied philosophy and Arabic at the University of Chicago and UCLA. He embraced Islam in 1977. He says:

> *I studied philosophy at the university and it taught me to ask two things of whoever claimed to have the truth: What do you mean, and how do you know? When I asked these questions of my own religious tradition, I found no answers, and realized that Christianity had slipped from my hands.* [75]

Professor Haroon Mustapha Lion

The general secretary of the World Association of the Science of the Origin of Languages, Sciences and Fine Arts, and the editor-in-chief of the London-based scientific magazine *Philomat*, said:

> *One of the traits of Islam is that it is based on mental aptitude. It does not call its followers to kill their intellectual abilities. Its position regarding thought runs counter to other doctrines which coerce their followers to blindly believing in ideologies and certain opinions.*

74. Berrington, Lucy. "Secure in sisterhood." The Times 9 Nov. 1993. Also see: Islamic future. Riyadh 1997. vol. 13, no. 69, p.2.

75. <http://masud.co.uk/ISLAM/nuh/bmuslim.htm>

Saifuddin Dirk Walter Mosig, U. S.A.

Born in a German Christian family in 1943, moved to Spain during the same year, and later in 1948, to Argentina. He attended his grade and high school at the Roman Catholic "La Salle" school in Cordoba, Argentine where he was lectured over an hour daily on Catholic religion. In fact, at twelve, his dream was to become a Roman Catholic priest. For the first time, this young Roman Catholic fanatic read a Spanish translation of the Noble Qur'an "expecting to find in it horrible errors, blasphemies, superstitions and contradictions" but to his amazement, he found the solutions to his dilemmas.

> *I have read the Sacred Scriptures of every religion; nowhere have I found what I encountered in Islam: perfection. The Holy Qur'an, compared to any other scripture I have read, is like the Sun compared to that of a match. I firmly believe that anybody who reads the Word of Allah with a mind that is not completely closed to Truth, will become a Muslim.*

Sarah Jacobs

She is a former Catholic. After one of her brothers married a Muslim, it took three years and Sarah Jacobs embraced Islam.

> *"What appealed to me was the incredible simplicity and clarity of Islam."* [76]

Sir Archibald Hamilton (5th Baronet)

Born in 10 December 1876, Sir Archibald was the son of Sir Edward Archibald Hamilton, 4th Baronet of Trebishun, Breconshire and 2nd Baronet of Marlborough House, Hampshire (1843–1915) and his wife was Mary Elizabeth Gill. (A Baronet is a British nobleman who holds the lowest hereditary rank). Sir Archibald embraced Islam in 1924. He died on 18 March 1939 and was buried at the Brookwood Cemetery alongside his friend, al-Hajj Shaikh Rahmatullah Headley al-Farooq. [77]

76. Petre, Jonathan. "Catholics turn to Islam as faith conversions rise." Telegraph 25 Oct 2005.

77. Noble, Mark and James Granger. A Biographical History of England, from the Revolution to the End of George I's Reign. 1806. pp. 211-213. Also see <http://leighrayment.com/>

Since arriving at an age of discretion, the beauty and the simple purity of Islam have always appealed to me. I could never, though born and brought up as a Christian, believe in the dogmatic aspect of the Church, and have always placed reason and commonsense above blind faith. As the time progressed, I wished to be at peace with my Creator, and I found that both the Church of Rome and the Church of England were of no real use to me. In becoming a Muslim, I have merely obeyed the dictates of my conscience, and have since felt a better and a truer man. There is no religion that is so maligned by the ignorant and the biased as is Islam; yet if people only knew, it is the religion of strong for the weak, the rich for the poor. Humanity is divided into three classes. First, those on whom God has, out of His bounty, bestowed possessions and wealth; secondly, those who have to work to earn their living; and lastly, the great army of the unemployed, or those who have fallen by the wayside through no fault of their own.

Tejatat Tejasen

Professor Tejatat Tejasen is the Chairman of the Department of Anatomy at Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Previously, he was the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the same university.

During the last three years, I became interested in the Qur'an . . . . From my study and what I have learned from this conference, I believe that everything that has been recorded in the Qur'an fourteen hundred years ago must be the truth, that can be proved by the scientific means. I think this is the time to say La ilaha illa Allah, there is no god to worship except Allah (God), Muhammad Rasoolu (Messenger of) Allah, Muhammad is Messenger of Allah . . . . The most precious thing I have gained from coming to this conference is La ilaha illa Allah (there is no god to worship except Allah (God), and to have become Muslim.

Ummu Travis

A lady who lived in Canada but decided to go to Dubai. After some months in Dubai, she converted to Islam. This is what she says about her state before embracing Islam.

"In fact, I was extremely ignorant of Islam and Muslims . . . ." [78]

78. Ummu Travis. "My Journey to Islam and the Concrete Jungle." teabreakthoughts.blogspot.com 2 Jan. 2009 <http://teabreakthoughts.blogspot.com/2009/01/my-journey-to-islam-and-concrete-jungle.html>

Vengatachalam Adiyar

An Indian noted Tamil writer and journalist; worked as a news editor in Dr. M. Karunanidhi's daily *Murasoli* for 17 years; assisted three former Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu. Received Kalaimamani Award (Big Gem of Arts) from Tamil Nadu Government in 1982. He embraced Islam in 1987 and changed name to Abdullah Adiyar.

> *In Islam, I found suitable replies to nagging queries arising in my mind with regard to the theory of creation, status of woman, creation of universe, etc. The life history of the holy Prophet attracted me very much and made easy for me to compare with other world leaders and their philosophies.*

Yahya Donald W. Flood

> *When I became a servent of Allah, I became liberated from all other forms of servitude. Others may think they are liberated but they are addicted to hoarding wealth, unlawful sex and intoxicants and their philosophies.*

Zahrah Riddle

> *Islam is very practical, providing guidance on every aspect, including prayers, diet, cleanliness, manners and respect for parents. Right and wrong are definite in Islam. Limits are set, I was never able to find this [in my previous religion]. I thank God daily for the gift of Islam.*

Part 1.5

More Prominent People Who Have Embraced Islam

It is the natural disposition to be atracted to sweet things. In the Qur'an, there is a chapter devoted to bees and it is called *The Bees*. It is 16 th chapter of the Qur'an.

"The future religion of the educated, cultured and enlightened people will be Islam"
~ George Bernard Shaw
(1856 – 1950)

More Reverts to Islam

The following is also a short list of people who embraced Islam. To confirm the authenticity of these Muslim reverts, just type their names on any search engines such as Google or Yahoo, then press the enter key and go through the relevant search results. Since they are notable people, the web would easily provide their details. They are:

Abdulla Webster ▶ Former Sergeant First Class in the United States Army who refused to deploy to Iraq.

Adam Ncanywa ▶ A south-African and a Former Christian actor who starred in such movies as *My adventures in Africa*, embraced Islam in 1989.

Alexander Russell Webb ▶ American journalist and newspaper owner. While serving as U.S. consul to the Philippines in 1887, he took a greater interest in Islam and embraced it in 1888. Webb became an enthusiastic propagator of Islam, founding the first Islamic institution in the United States: the American Mission. He wrote numerous books intended to introduce Islam to Americans, started the first Islamic press in the United States, published a journal entitled the Moslem World, and served as the representative of Islam at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religion in Chicago. In 1901, he was appointed Honorary Turkish Consul General in New York and was invited to Turkey, where he received two Ottoman medals of merit.

Alexander Litvinenko ▶ Former Russian spy embraced Islam on his deathbed.

Abdullah al-Faruq ▶ Formerly Kenneth L. Jenkins, minister and elder of the Pentecostal Church.

Art Blakey ▶ American drummer and jazz musician. Now known as Abdullah Ibn Buhaina.

Ali Muhammad Mori ▶ Social worker and preacher from Japan.

Anselm Tormeeda ▶ A priest and Christian scholar from Spain. He wrote a famous book called *The Gift to the Intelligent for Refuting the Arguments of the Christians*.

Amir Butler ▶ Author, Engineer and Islamic activist.

Bruno Metsu ▶ French coach of the Senegal team at the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

Bilal Philips ▶ Born in 1947 in Jamaica, but grew up in Canada where he accepted Islam in 1972. He did a diploma in Arabic language and a B.A. Degree (1979) from the College of Islamic Disciplines at the Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia. Obtained an M.A. Degree (1985) in Islamic Theology from the University of Riyadh, and his Ph.D in Islamic Theology in the department of Islamic studies at the University of Wales (1994). Bilal had taught Islamic education and Arabic language in Saudi Arabia and Philippines. He founded and directed the Islamic Information Center (which is now known as Discover Islam) in Dubai. Dr. Bilal is currently a lecturer of Arabic language and Islamic Studies at the American University in Dubai and Ajman University in Ajmān, United Arab Emirates. He has also founded Islamic Online University, which offers a four year degree in Islamic Studies plus a variety of short courses. He has authored *The Qur'aan's Numerical Miracle - Hoax and Heresy*; *Evolution of Fiqh*; *Islamic law and The Madh-habs*; *Tafseer Soorah al-Hujuraat*; *The Ansar Cult*; *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*; *Hajj and Umrah According to Qur'aan and Sunnah*; *The Exorcist Tradition in Islam* ;*Islamic Studies (Book:1)*; *Salvation Through Repentance*; *The True Religion* ; *The Clash of Civilisations* ; and co-authored *Polygamy in Islam*. He has also made translations of *Ibn Tayameeyah's Essay on the Jinn* and *The Devil's Deception*. He frequently appears on *Peace TV*, an international Islamic satellite channel.

Bob Crane ▶ Ex- Economic Advisor to President Nixon.

C. Jack Ellis ▶ Mayor of Macon, Georgia.

Chris Eubank ▶ Former super middleweight world champion who embraced Islam in March 1997 and changed name to Hamdan.

Dawud Wharnsby Ali ▶ Canadian singer/poet.

Daniel Moore ▶ Highly talented Anglo-American poet.

Dwight Muhammad Qawi ▶ Former boxing world heavyweight champion.

David Chappelle ▶ Comedian and television star.

Danny Williams ▶ Was the Commonwealth and British Heavyweight Boxing Champion.

Dr. Arthur (Abdulla) ▶ From U.K, he was an eminent biologist, electrical engineer, and Professor at the University of London and the University of Oxford.

Dr. Rolf Freiherr Von Ehrenfeels (Dr. Umar Rolf Baron Ehrenfeels) ▶ An Australian born as the only son of the late Baron Christian Ehrenfels, (founder of Austria`s modern structural (Gestalt, psychology). Dr. Ehrenfels accepted Islam in 1927, and later became a Professor of Anthropology and authored numerous scientific and Islamic publications.

Dr. Abdul Karim Germanus ▶ (Hungarian) Head of the Dept. and Professor and Scholar of Oriental and Islamic Studies at the Budapest University.

David Benjamin Keldani, B.D. (Prof. Abdul Ahd Dawud,BD) ▶ An Iranian who was formerly a Christian Reverend before embracing Islam.

Emma Clark ▶ She was the great-granddaughter of the British Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith. Emma's ancestor, the Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, took Britain into the First World War.[79] Herbert Henry Asquith, (1852 –1928) served as the Liberal Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1908 to 1916. He was the longest-serving Prime Minister of the twentieth century until early 1988, when his record was surpassed by Margaret Thatcher.

Eddie Gregory ▶ World champion lightweight boxer. In March 31, 1980, he defeated Marvin Johnson by 11th-round knockout in Knoxville to win the World Boxing Association championship. He then reverted to Islam and changed name to Eddie Mustafa Muhammad.

Erwin Bauer ▶ From Germany. He became the Editor of the *Al-Fadjr* Islamic magazine in Hamburg.

Erik Schrody ▶ Lead singer of *Everlast*, who is of Irish decent, converted from Catholicism to Islam in 1997. The rapper turned rocker's hit single *What It's Like* off his *Whitey Ford Sings the Blues*, garnered triple-platinum sales of his album. The lyrics of his album's closing track, *Graves to Dig*, reflect his religion: "One for the prophet/Two for Islam/Three for the khutba from the imam."

Franck Ribery ▶ Ribéry (born 1983), who earned the French Player of the Year title in 2007 and 2008, converted to Islam to marry Wahiba, a French national of Algerian descent. The couple have two daughters, Hizya and Shakinez. Ribery who is now known as Franck Bilal Ribery is a devout Muslim who prays to Allah prior to every match. John Lichfield wrote in the Independent in 2006: "He raises his hands to Allah before every match."[80] Ribery had once said: "Islam is my source of strength either in or outside the playground . . . . I lead a difficult career and I was determined to find peace of mind, and I finally found Islam."

Franck Ribery in the field

Ribery supplicating to Allah in the field

Ribery perfoming Umrah in the Grand Mosque of Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

79. Hellen, Nicholas and Christopher Morgan. "Islamic Britain lures top people." The Sunday Times 22 Feb. 2004.

80. Lichfield, John. "Convert to Islam changes French mindset: Rebel Ribéry strides from sink estate to brink of greatness." Independent 6 Oct. 2006.

Frithjof Schuon ▶ Metaphysician, poet, painter, philosopher (in the original and Platonic sense of this term), and a leading figure of the perennialist school.

Father Athony Perera, O.M.I. (Noor Qasim) ▶ Born into a Catholic family, he received training in a seminary in central Sri Lanka from 1962 -1971. He served as a parish priest in his native village of Mutuwal. He is now an associate of the Sri Lanka Islamic Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Frederic Oumar Kanoute ▶ (Born 2 Sept. 1977 in Sainte-Foy-lès-Lyon) is a French born Malian footballer, who plays for Sevilla in the Spanish league. On February 2, 2008, Kanouté was named the 2007 African Footballer of the Year and is the first foreign-born player to win it. There was a time when he splashed out more than US$ 700,000 to buy his own mosque in Spain. [81]

Gai Eaton ▶ A former British diplomat now in his seventies. His influential work *Islam and the Destiny of Man* has become required reading for bright young Anglo-Saxons turning to his adopted Faith.

George Anthony ▶ Former Catholic priest.

Hassan Ole Naado ▶ Hassan K. Ole Naado was born on 1968 in Shartuka, a village located in Transmara district, Kenya. He completed his courses from University of Birmingham (UK) and had worked as a Project Manager with SUPKEM (Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims). Currently, he is the Chief Executive Officer of (KMYA) Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance. He is also the founder and Chief Editor of The New Dawn Publication. You can contact Mr. Hassan through his email, olenaado@kenyamuslims.org

Hussein Ye ▶ Well-known Japanese economist, social worker and preacher. Born in 1892, he embraced Islam in 1941. He performed Hajj in 1958 and was elected President of the Japan Muslim Association in 1960. He translated the meanings of the Holy Qur`an into Japanese in 1972.

Hussein Ye is a New Muslim

Hajji Umar Mitaa ▶ a scholar of Chinese descent and a former Buddhist who turned to Islam at the age of 18 in 1968. He graduated in 1978 at the Islamic University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia majoring in Hadith. He also studied under the great scholar, Shaikh Muhammad Nasiruddin Al Albani. Ye was the director of the Muslim association in Hong Kong. He travels around the world giving Islamic lectures and he is frequently broadcasted on Peace TV.

Ice Cube ▶ Gangster rapper and actor.

81. Minshull, Phil. "Devout worshipper." BBC Sport12 Dec. 2007.

Ivan Aguéli ▶ Famous Swedish painter.

Isabelle Eberhardt ▶ Explorer and writer.

Ilich Ramírez Sánchez ▶ Aka *"Carlos the Jackal"*, convicted murderer and terrorist, currently in prison in France.

James Yee ▶ Former U.S. Army Muslim chaplain.

Józef Bem ▶ Polish-Hungarian general, considered a national hero of Poland

Jimmy Cliff ▶ Jamaican reggae musician.

Jimmy Jones ▶ Afro-American Professor at Springfield College in Massachusetts and a volunteer Muslim chaplain in the Connecticut prison system.

Joe Ahmed Dobson ▶ Son of former cabinet minister Frank Dobson. The 26-year-old is now chairman of the Muslim Council of Britain's Regeneration Committee.

Jose Padilla ▶ Jose (born 1970), also known as Abdullah al-Muhajir is a Brooklyn-born convert to Islam who became one of the first Americans designated an "enemy combatant" . Padilla was sentenced to 17 years and four months in prison for his conviction on charges that he conspired to help Islamic terrorists around the world.

Khalid Yasin ▶ American, Executive Director of the Islamic Teaching Institute, and a Shaykh currently residing in Australia.

Kotaro Al-Hajj Omar M. Yamaoka ▶ He was the first Japanese Muslim to perform the Hajj. The year was 1909.

Knud Holmboe ▶ Danish journalist and explorer; converted from Catholicism.

Mohammed Knut Bernström ▶ Swedish ambassador to Venezuela (1963-1969), Spain (1973-1976) and Morocco (1976-1983).

Mohammed Zakariya ▶ An American master of Arabic calligraphy, best known for his work on the popular Eid U.S. postage stamp.

Mohammad Yousuf ▶ From Catholicism, Pakistani cricketer. Known for holding the world record for the most Test runs in a single calendar year.

Muhammad Abd-al-Rahman Barker (Philip Barker) ▶ He was a Professor of Urdu. Philip Barker was born in 1930, studied at University of Washington, and at the age of 21, he received a Fulbright Scholarship to study Indian languages. He then attended the University of California, Berkeley for graduate studies. It was in 1951, on his first trip to India, when he embraced Islam. "For

purely theological reasons. It seemed like a more logical religion," he says. He had taught at McGill University, and at the University of Minnesota, where he became the chair the Department of South Asian studies. He created the world of *Tékumel*, a fantasy world based on ancient India, the Middle East, the Aztecs and Maya, and other non-European sources. He currently resides in Minneapolis, MN, USA.

Mario Scialoja ▶ He was, at one time, Rome's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York. He was later posted to Saudi Arabia as Italy's ambassador in 1994-95. He is the head of Italy's Muslim League.

The movie star Mos Def embraced Islam at the age of 19.

Mos Def ▶ American rapper & actor. He was born as Dante Smith in 1974, got his first exposure to Islam when he was 13 and at the age of 19, he took his *shahada* (the Muslim declaration of faith). Mos Def has been quoted saying: "You're not gonna get through life without being worshipful or devoted to something. You're either devoted to your job, or to your desires. So the best way to spend your life is to try to be devoted to prayer, to Allah."

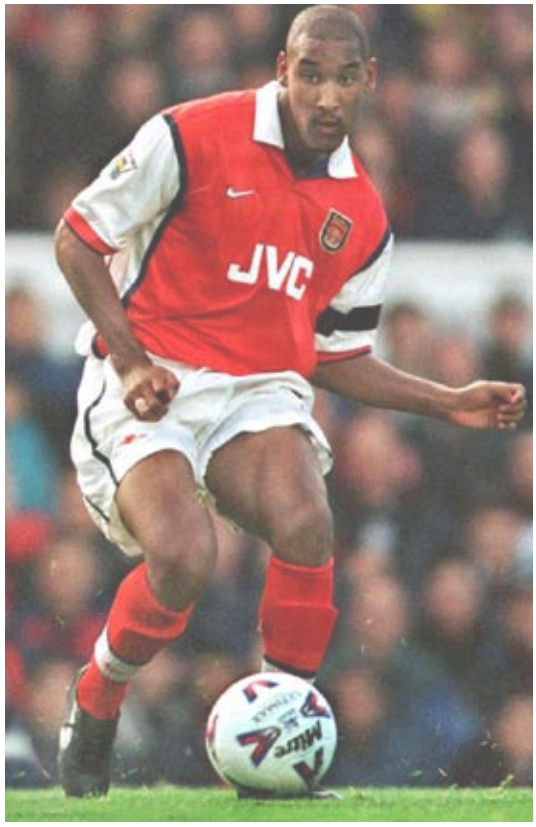
Martin John Mwaipopo ▶ Former Lutheran Archbishop from Tanzania.

Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf (Chris Jackson) ▶ Retired basketball player

Michael Muhammad Knight ▶ American novelist, writer and journalist.

Martin Lings ▶ Martin Lings is an acclaimed author, editor, translator, scholar, Arabist, and poet. He was raised as a Protestant, became an atheist, and later reverted to Islam. He was born in Burnage, Lancashire, 1909. He went to Clifton College, Bristol, where he became head boy, and read English at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he became a close friend of CS Lewis. After taking an English degree at Oxford in 1932, he was appointed lecturer in Anglo-Saxon at the University of Kaunas. His interest in Islam and in Arabic took him to Egypt in 1939. He taught English and English literature at the University of Cairo from 1940 until 1951. In 1952 he returned to England and took a degree in Arabic at London University. Lings received his PhD from the University of London in 1959. From 1970-74 he was Keeper of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books at the British Museum (in 1973 his Department became part of the British Library) where he had been in special charge of the Qur'an manuscripts, amongst other treasures, since 1955. Dr. Martin Lings is the author of many books, the most outstanding and which has caused many to embrace Islam is his authoritative biography of the Prophet, *Muhammed, His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*. This bestseller has been translated into more than a dozen languages and has received numerous

awards.



Nicolas Anelka is a Muslim

MC Ren ▶ American rapper and hip-hop producer.

Micheal Barry ▶ TV cook and radio programmer who changed his name to Micheal Bukhit.

Matthew Wilkinson ▶ Matthew, a son of a president of a British institution, made headlines when he embraced Islam and changed his name to Tariq in 1993. He was a former Eton head boy. Eton is one of the most prestigious public schools in Britain. Matthew had studied Islam in depth, before accepting it. After becoming a Muslim, he began convincing his former Eton schoolmates to embrace Islam.[82]

Matthew Franklin ▶ World champion boxer. Changed name to Matthew Saad Muhammad.

Muriel Degauque ▶ A Belgian convert to Islam. On November 9, 2005, she became the second woman to conduct an Al Qaeda suicide bombing, detonating a bomb near Baghdad in Baquba as she drove past a U.S. patrol, killing herself and injuring one soldier. A poem posted by an unidentified man on a web forum following Degauques's suicide attack showed how she outshined some Muslim men: *"Sister you have embarrassed me / You have accomplished what I failed to do / And what men with long beards and turbans have also failed to accomplish / What have you done to us?/ You relentless, honorable woman."*

Mustafa Hamsho ▶ World champion boxing legend.

Nicolas Anelka ▶ The 1.84m tall French footballer 's career history shows that he had played for Arsenal, Real Madrid, Liverpool, Manchester City, Fenerbahce, Bolton, and currently, he plays as a striker for Chelsea in the English Premier League. He is a Muslim convert.

Omar Bongo ▶ Gabonese, President of Gabon.

Pamela Taylor ▶ Science fiction author, Publications Officer of the Islamic Writers Alliance and co-chair of the Progressive Muslim Union.

Pernilla Ouis ▶ Swedish human ecologist, lecturer at Lund University.

Preacher Moss ▶ American comedian and comedy writer.

82. Whittell, Giles. "Allah Came Knocking At My Heart." The Times 7 Jan. 2002.

Poncke Princen ▶ Dutch soldier, later human rights activist.

Philippe Troussier ▶ French, former football player & trainer of a Japanese football team.

Pascal Cygan ▶ French football player (born April 29, 1974 in Lens), currently playing for Villarreal CF. He joined Arsenal F.C. in the summer of 2002 for €3m (at that time, he was worth £2.1m).

Reuben Chebutich ▶ Reuben Chebutich, the marathon runner from Kenya, was born on 24 August 1968. He converted to Islam in Durham, NC, USA on 27 January 2008 and adopted Bashir as his new Islamic name.[83] The places he participated in marathon are: Houston, TX (14 Jan. 2007), Amsterdam (17 Oct. 1999), Berlin (20 Sept. 1998).

Robert D. Crane ▶ Dr. Robert (born 1929) is the former adviser to the late President of the United States Richard Nixon, and former Deputy Director (for Planning) of the U.S. National Security Council. In 1981, he was appointed by President Reagan to be U.S. ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. Dr. Robert has authored or co-authored more than a dozen books and over 50 professional articles on comparative legal systems, global strategy, and information management. He is a cousin of former Republican members of the U.S. House of Representatives Phil Crane and Dan Crane. Dr. Robert has worked full-time as a Muslim activist in America. From 1983 to 1986, he was the Director of Da'wa (Islamic calling) at the Islamic Center on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, D.C. In 1986 he joined the International Institute of Islamic Thought as its Director of Publications, and then helped to found the American Muslim Council, serving as Director of its Legal Division from 1992 to 1994. He has been a board member of the United Association for Studies and Research and Managing Editor of its Middle East Affairs Journal and he is also an editor for the online magazine *The American Muslim*. He was also the founding President of the American Muslim Bar Association and was Chairman for the Center for Understanding Islam.

Roger (Abdul Karim) Du Pasquier ▶ Well-known journalist and author from Switzerland.

Rowland Allanson ▶ Winn, 5th Baron Headley - British soldier and peer.

Robin van Persie ▶ Dutch footballer (born August 6, 1983 in Rotterdam) currently playing at English FA Premier League team Arsenal as a striker. He is married to Bouchra, a Dutch-Moroccan.

Ruslan Nigmatullin ▶ The highly talented Russian goalkeeper.

Scarface ▶ American rapper.

Siraj Wahaj ▶ African-American Imam, noted for his efforts to eliminate Brooklyn's drug problems.

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83. See his conversion on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejO7Re1xKi0> ;See his biography from the website of International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) <http://www.iaaf.org/athletes/biographies/country=KEN/athcode=172985/index.html>

Salma Arastu ▶ Indian artist living in North America.

Sharmila Tagore ▶ Renowned Indian film actress from Bengal.

Shabbetai Tzevi ▶ Seventeenth-century Turkish Jew who had claimed to be Messiah and attracted a large following. His conversion to Islam largely dissolved this mass messianic Jewish movement.

Terry, the Guantanamo Guard, now a devout Muslim

Terry Holdbrooks ▶ Terry Holdbrooks, born in 1983 is a former solider with the U.S. Army who was stationed at Guantanamo Bay from 2003 to 2004. He grew up in Phoenix, with junkie parents and before joining the military in 2002, Terry was known to be a heavy drinker. However, he converted to Islam while still a guard at the Guantanamo Bay. He was exposed to Islam through a conversation with detainee 590, a Moroccan also known as "the General" whose real name is Ahmed Errachidi. Terry converted to Islam in early 2004 after having read many books on Islam. Some of the books he was reading are *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam* and the six-volume set of Muslim sacred texts. In his website, he writes: "My open mind served me well in GTMO, as it allowed for me to have an interest in learning the lives and cultures, the languages, and eventually, inshAllah, Islam. . . Upon a further inspection I am confident that we will all see matters that need to be reformed so that our future generations grow up to be smarter and more aware of the world they live in, and so that we can stop inheriting our fathers wars." His soon-to-be-published book is entitled *Traitor*.[84]

Thomas Ballantyne Irving ▶ Born in Preston, Ontario in 1914, TB Irving was a professor, writer, translator and activist. He had the first country's Sunni mosque built in his hometown of Cedar Rapids, Iowa and he was the first to translate the Qur'an into American English. In addition, the books he authored include, *Growing Up In Islam*; *The Quran: Basic Teachings*, which he co-authored with Dr. Khurshid Ahmad and Muhammad Manazir Ahsan; *Had You Been Born a Muslim*; *Religion and Social Responsibility*; *Tide of Islam*; *Islam Resurgent*; *Islam in its Essence*; *Polished Jade*; *Stories of Kalil and Dimna*; *The Mayas Own Words*; *Falcon of Spain* among other titles. Among the universities he taught include McGill University, Princeton University, University of San Carlos, University of Minneapolis, and the University of Tennessee. He has also served as the dean of the American Islamic College in Chicago between 1981-1986. Dr. Irving died on 24 September 2002 in his Mississippi home.

Thomas James Abercrombie ▶ He was the legendary *National Geographic* magazine photographer and writer, and an NPPA (National Press Photographers Association) life member who joined in 1952. In addition to his many lifetime accomplishments, Abercrombie also had the distinction of winning both the Newspaper and Magazine Photographer of the Year titles early in

84. Ephron, Dan. "The Guard Who Found Islam." Newsweek 30 March 2009. Also see Quinn, Ben. "Guantánamo guard held at Heathrow." The Observer 30 Aug. 2009; <www.brothermustafa.com >

his career. For the October 1966 issue of the magazine he took the first photographs of Mecca published in the Western world.

Jonathan Yahya Birt chose Islam

Torquato Cardilli ▶ Italian ambassador; converted from Catholicism to Islam on November 16, 2001. Cardilli is a graduate in oriental culture and languages from the University of Naples. Following postings in Sudan, Syria, Iraq and Libya, he took over the embassy in Riyadh. Cardilli has also served as ambassador to Albania and Tanzania.

William Abdullah Quilliam ▶ William Henry Quilliam (1856 – 1932), was a 19th century British poet, ambassador and journalist, noted for founding England's first mosque and Islamic centre. He was known and respected for his literary works and the charitable institutions he founded. It is said that Queen Victoria had even read one of his well known books, *The Faith of Islam*. He was trained at the Liverpool institute and reverted to Islam at the age of 31 when he visited morocco.

Yahya Birt ▶ Journalist and son of former BBC Director General John Birt, also director of *The City Circle*.

Yahiya Emerick ▶ American Muslim scholar, president of the Islamic Foundation of North America, born into a Protestant family but embraced Islam in 1989. He founded Amirah Publishing in 1992 in order to facilitate the publishing of American-oriented literature on Islam. One of Emerick's books has been adopted into the curriculum of Al-Azhar University in Egypt. Some of his books are: *Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam*; *Critical Lives: Muhammad*; *Learning About Islam*; *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English*; *My First Book About Islam*; *What Islam is All About*; *How to Tell Others About Islam*; *In the Path of the Holy Prophet*; *Test Masters for What Islam is All About*; *Test Masters for Learning About Islam*; *Isabella a Girl of Muslim Spain.*

Zaid Shakir ▶ He is an African-American born in Berkeley, California and who accepted Islam in 1977 while serving in the United States Air Force after spending time reading and learning about various faiths and practices. He obtained a BA with honors in International Relations at American University in Washington D.C. and later earned his MA in Political Science at Rutgers University. Among the places he went in search of religious knowledge include Egypt, Syria and Morocco. Zaid Shakir co-founded Masjid al-Islam, where he served as Imam, the Tri-State Muslim Education Initiative, and the Connecticut Muslim Coordinating Committee. In 2003, he moved to Hayward, California to serve as a scholar-in-residence and lecturer at Zaytuna Institute.

Zhang Chengzhi ▶ Contemporary Hui Chinese author. He was raised as an atheist but later reverted to Islam.

PART 2

WILL ISLAM DOMINATE?

Such a message is occasionally visible during Muslim Demonstrations. How real is it!

". . . God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

~ Genesis 1:28

Big Numbers, Great Meanings

". . . Islam is the fastest growing religion. Demographers predict that one out of every four human beings will be Muslim in 24 years. If demographics is power, then the world is tilting toward a Muslim century." [85]

~ Jeremy Rifkin, the well-known American economist. He is the author of *The Age of Access* and president of the Foundation on Economic Trends in Washington.

We cannot exhaust the hundreds of thousands of individuals who revert to Islam in this book. If I attempt to profile all the reverts, I would obviously appear in *Guinness World Records* for writing the most voluminous book in the world - for which I have no intentions. If America alone, the *NBC* News report that 20,000 Americans revert to Islam each year, 75% of them are women and according to *St. Petersburg Times* "Every year, about 20,000 people in the United States convert to Islam, in addition to those who convert in prison . . . Of these converts, there are more women than men, the majority of them young and unmarried . . . ."[86] Then how do you expect us to profile all these *20,000* converts without being overcome by exhaustion and boredom. It is also reported that, "In fact, religion experts say Islam is the second-largest religion in the United States . . . . Islam has 5 million to 6 million members, followed by Judaism, with approximately 4.5 million . . . . And Islam is believed to be the fastest-growing religion in the country, with half its expansion coming from new immigrants and the *other half from conversions*." [87] And in *Christianity Today*:

> Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions in America, and the massive number of African-American converts—in prisons, colleges, and inner cities—is a key factor. There are more than 2 million black Muslims in the United States, and if current trends prevail, that figure will continue to swell.[88]

85. Rifkin, Jeremy. "Dialogue is a Necessity." The Guardian 13 Nov. 2001.

86. Wiener, Jocelyn (Times Staff Writer). "Young, Female and Muslim." St. Petersburg Times 7 Oct. 2002.

87. Arnett, Elsa C. Knight-Ridder News Service.

88. Ellis, Carl. "Conversations: Carl Ellis on How Islam Is Winning Black America." By Edward Gilbreath. Christianity Today 3 April 2000. Vol. 44. No. 4.

And then we read elsewhere that:

> Increasing numbers of Latinas are converting to Islam, for love, faith and, some say, a sense of respect . . . . The American Muslim Council, based in Chicago, estimates that there are more than 200,000 Latino Muslims in the United States . . . . Mariam Abassi, vice president of the Da'wah (outreach) program at the center (i.e. The North Hudson Islamic Educational Center, in Union City, N.J.), said about 500 members of the center are Latino converts.[89]

The mind is further boggled reading that, "Islam has become the No. 1 non-Christian faith in Quebec*, as in Canada as a whole."[90] Elsewhere, we find that "Figures from the 2001 Canadian census released yesterday by Statistics Canada show that the number of people claiming to be of Muslim faith increased by 128.9 per cent to 579,640 in the decade beginning in 1991, making Islam the fastest growing religion in Canada."[91]

And in Britain, according to *The Times,* ". . . Unprecedented numbers of British people, nearly all of them women, are converting to Islam at a time of deep divisions within the Anglican and Catholic churches."[92] An article which appeared in *The Sunday Times* on 22 February 2004 stated that, "...more than 14,000 white Britons have converted to Islam after becoming disillusioned with western values, according to the first authoritative study of the phenomenon."[93] On the other hand, British Home Secretary Jacqui Smith confirmed that more than 50,000 are converting to Islam each year.[94] It is further estimated that ". . . anywhere between 10,000 and 50,000 people a year convert to Islam in the UK . . . ."[95] And Rose Kendrick, a religious education teacher at a Hull comprehensive and the author of a textbook guide to the Koran says: "Within the next 20 years the number of British converts will equal or overtake the immigrant Muslim community that brought the faith here"[96] With such a burgeoning number of converts, it is of no shock to learn that the Queen of England has converted a room at Windsor Castle into a prayer space for Muslim staff.[97] Windsor Castle is the largest inhabited castle in the world and one of the principal official residences of the British monarch. Should people neglect the words of Anjem Choudary who was speaking at a meeting in London? Choudary, the Muslim preacher, without equivocation and

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89. Conci, Pilar. "Latina converts look for answers in Islam." Columbia News Service 27 May 2008. Another article on Latina conversions to Islam see; Armario, Christine. "US Latinas seek answers in Islam." The Christian Science Monitor 27 Dec. 2004.

* Quebec is a province in the central part of Canada; the only Canadian province with a predominantly French-speaking population; it is Canada's largest province by area (nearly three times the size of France or Texas and its second-largest administrative division; it is the second most populous province, after Ontario.

90. Shepard, Harvey. "Islam Thrives in Quebec." Montreal Gazette 14 May 2003.

91. Galloway, Gloria. "Muslims Outnumber Jews in Canada." Toronto Globe and Mail 14 May 2003.

92. Berrington, Lucy. "Why Are British Women Turning to Islam?" The Times 9 Nov. 1993.

93. Hellen, Nicholas and Christopher Morgan. "Islamic Britain lures top people." The Sunday Times 22 Feb. 2004.

94. Roznama Jasarat (Pakistan) 22 May 2008. Also see Rupee News (New York) 20 July 2008.

95. Smith, Robert. "Islam will be dominant UK religion." Gulf Daily News 10 March 2004.

96. Berrington, Lucy. "Why Are British Women Turning to Islam?" The Times 9 Nov. 1993.

97. Sayed, Ruki. "Queen opens Muslim prayer room at Windsor Castle." Voice of the Mirror 30 Sept. 2006. Page 8. Also see: "Queen sanctions first ever Muslim prayer room." Daily Mail 29 Sept. 2006.

circumlocutions, said: "It may be by pure conversion that Britain will become an Islamic state. We may never need to conquer it from the outside." [98]

What about this scaring report from *The Times*:

> The Muslim population in Britain has grown by more than 500,000 to 2.4 million in just four years, according to official research collated for *The Times*. The population multiplied 10 times faster than the rest of society, the research by the Office for National Statistics reveals. In the same period the number of Christians in the country fell by more than 2 million. Experts said that the increase was attributable to immigration, a higher birthrate and conversions to Islam during the period of 2004-2008, when the data was gathered.[99]

And within a span of around two or three years, "Some 3,000 to 5,000 Italians have converted to Islam from Catholicism in recent years,"[100]

On 26 July 2005, *United Press International* reported, "Islam is becoming an increasingly popular religion in Belgium, with some four hundred converts last year."[101] *De Standaard* is a Flemish daily newspaper published in Belgium. In an article published in 2004, *De Standaard* reported that "400 Belgians each year convert to Islam in the great Mosque of Brussels"[102]

And according to *Swissinfo,* "Around 30,000 women in Switzerland have converted to Islam, according to a recent report by an organization for Muslim women."[103]

Moreover, an Interior Ministry-sponsored study on Muslim life in Germany revealed that:

> . . . In Germany, some 4,000 people converted to Islam between July 2004 and June 2005. The study, which was financed by the Interior Ministry and carried out by the Soest-based Muslim institute Islam Archive Germany, reveals that the number of converts increased four-fold in comparison to the previous year . . . .[104]

The Jerusalem Post dated 23 January 2007 report: "As many as 100,000 French and British citizens have converted to Islam over the last decade, according to a new book by an Israeli historian."[105] The figures have been cited by Hebrew University Professor Raphael Israeli in his book *The Third Islamic Invasion of Europe.*

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98. France, Anthony and Vince Soodin. "We need more Muslim babies ... then we can take over Britain." The Sun 13 Sept. 2008.

99. Kerbaj, Richard. "Muslim population 'rising 10 times faster than rest of society." The Times 30 Jan. 2009.

100. Baker, Luke. "Rome's envoy to S. Arabia converts to Islam." Reuters 26 Nov. 2001.

101. "Islam on rise in Belgium." United Press International 26 July 2005.

102. "Islam in Belgium." De Standaard 20 Nov. 2004.

103. Berthoud, Jean-Michel. "Putting their faith in Islam." Swissinfo 14 March 2005.

104. Ackermann, Lutz. "Angst-Ridden Germans Look for Answers -- And Find Them in the Koran." Der Spiegel 18 Jan. 2007. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,460364,00.html>

105. Lefkovits, Etgar. "Islam converts change face of Europe." The Jerusalem Post 23 Jan.2007

In 2000, the French Ministry of the Interior estimated the total number of people born into Islam as 4.1 million and converts as about 40,000.[106] And the 2006 issue of *The Washington Post* states: "Estimates vary on the number of Islamic converts in the country (i.e. France) -- from 30,000 to 100,000 . . ."[107]

Do you come from a land *Down Under* (i.e. Australia)? Then, you better run, you better take cover because we have heard *ABC Local Radio* reporting:

> As the Government tries to find a ways to prevent Muslim extremism in Australia, *the number of people converting to Islam is increasing*. Queensland's Islamic community says its numbers have more than doubled in recent years, and it now boasts more than 15,000 followers, including those who've turned away from other religions such as Christianity.[108]

And on 18 November 2003, the *Syndey Morning Herald* featured an article on the phenomenon of conversions in Australia. It reported that:

> Islam is among NSW's (New South Wales) fastest growing religions, with the growth strongly driven by disenchanted Catholics and Anglican . . . . Yet, Islam is among NSW's fastest-growing religions, the numbers of adherents increasing by 40 per cent since the 1996 census when 102,288 nominated themselves as Muslim. Its growth is not solely the result of Sydney's status as an immigration centre and the higher birth rates of Arabic-speaking families. Against all expectations, Australian Christians, including Catholics and Anglicans, and agnostics are finding Islam an answer to their spiritual voids . . . . Why would Christians convert? A University of New England academic, Laurence Tamatea, says Islam is attractive because of its universal message, its sense of community, sense of belonging, of a brotherhood and sisterhood.[109]

In Australia, there are a group of people known as the Aborigines, the majority being Christians, converted by European settlers. However, the BBC reporting about them reveal that:

> Many have embraced the religion (i.e. Islam) for spiritual reasons, while others insist it gives them a way to escape the oppression suffered by the country's indigenous population . . . . A small but growing number of young Aboriginal men are now turning to Islam, and it is now estimated there are 1,000 Aboriginal Muslims in Australia, including new recruits and descendants of mixed marriages.[110]

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106. "l'Islam dans la République" (Haut Conseil à l'intégration, Nov. 2000, p.26)

107. Whitlock, Craig. "Trial of French Islamic Radical Sheds Light on Converts' Role." Washington Post 1 Jan. 2006, A01.

108. Millar, Lisa. "Number of Islamic converts increasing." AM. ABC Local Radio. 27 Aug. 2005. 08:06:10 < http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2005/s1447377.htm>

109. "Converts in the houses of the Lord." Syndey Morning Herald 18. Nov. 2003.

110. "Aborigines turn to Islam." bbc.co.uk 31 March. 2003 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/2902315.stm>

If we take a *safari* to Africa, we would find that Africa is not only a predominantly Muslim continent but also ". . . most experts agree that Islam is spreading faster than any other faith in East and West Africa."[111] According to *World Book Encyclopedia*, Islam is the largest religion in Africa, followed by Christianity and on the authority of *Western Journal of Black Studies (2005)*, the Muslims comprised of 45.1% of the population while Christians were 36.9%.[112] But what is worth observing is that "A recent report by a Christian organization, Frontline Fellowship, which spearheads the growth of Christianity in Africa, indicates that Islam is growing at a fast rate in this impoverished continent . . . . It says *Islam is growing twice as fast as Christianity in Africa.*" [113]

And why shouldn't Islam be accepted by Africans when it is widely known that "Islamic values have much in common with traditional African life: its emphasis on communal living, its clear roles for men and women, its tolerance of polygamy"[114] , whereas Christianity as a way of life is much in conflict with most of African traditional values. Little wonder then to hear Reverend Benjamin Kwashi, the Anglican bishop of Jos, Nigeria say: "The Muslims are winning -- they have won. Islam is growing very fast. For many Africans, it makes more sense to reject America and Europe's secular values, a culture of selfishness and half-naked women, by embracing Islam."[115]

Another illustration is that in Madagascar 17, 500 of Intimor tribe reverted en-masse[116]

The *Washington Post* reveals the phenomenal growth of Islam even in Rwanda:

> . . . Since the genocide, Rwandans have converted to Islam in huge numbers. Muslims now make up 14 percent of the 8.2 million people here in Africa's most Catholic nation, twice as many as before the killings began . . . . Many converts say they chose Islam because of the role that some Catholic and Protestant leaders played in the genocide . . . . In contrast, many Muslim leaders and families are being honored for protecting and hiding those who were fleeing . . . . "I know people in America think Muslims are terrorists, but for Rwandans they were our freedom fighters during the genocide," said Jean Pierre Sagahutu, 37, a Tutsi who converted to Islam from Catholicism after his father and nine other members of his family were slaughtered. "I wanted to hide in a church, but that was the worst place to go. Instead, a Muslim family took me. They saved my life.". . . . "If it weren't for the Muslims, my whole family would be dead," said Aisha Uwimbabazi, 27, a convert and mother of two children. "I was very, very thankful for Muslim people during the genocide. I thought about it and I really felt it was right to change."[117]

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111. Onishi, Norimitsu. "Rising Muslim Power in Africa Causes Unrest in Nigeria and Elsewhere." New York Times Also see: Kaba, Amadu Jackay. "Spread of Christianity and Islam in Africa: A Survey and Analysis of the Numbers and Percentages of Christians, Muslims, and Those Who Practice Indigenous Religions," Western Journal of Black Studies. Vol. 29, no.2, 2005, p. 561.

112. Kaba, Amadu Jackay. Western Journal of Black Studies. Vol. 29, No.2, 2005. p. 561.

113. Jomo, Frank. "Islam making in-roads in Zambia." newsfromafrica.org 19 July 2006. <http://www.newsfromafrica.org/newsfromafrica/articles/art_10733.html>

114. Onishi, Norimitsu. "Rising Muslim Power in Africa Causes Unrest in Nigeria and Elsewhere." New York Times 1 Nov. 2001.

115. Onishi, Norimitsu. "Rising Muslim Power in Africa Causes Unrest in Nigeria and Elsewhere." New York Times 1 Nov. 2001.

116. <http://www.islamicvoice.com/january.2000/embraced.htm>

117. Wax, Emily. "Islam Attracting Many Survivors of Rwanda Genocide." Washington Foreign Post Service 23 Sept. 2002.p. A10. See <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A53018-2002Sep22.html>

The 2002 January edition of *The Christian Science Monitor* carried the title: "In South Africa, many blacks convert to Islam" writing therein that "Islam is growing in South African communities, offering a haven from social vices, an ethic of charity for the needy, and social reform." The paper mentioned that, "The faith (i.e. Islam) is attracting both poor shantytown dwellers who appreciate Islam's emphasis on charity, and young intellectuals attracted by the faith's focus on lifestyle and social reform." And it is estimated that in Soweto alone, there were 10,000 converts to Islam as in 2002.[118] *Independent Online* is a wholly owned subsidiary of Independent News & Media, a media organization based in Dublin, Ireland with interests in 22 countries on 4 continents. The Newspaper writes:

> Black South Africans, drawn to the Islam practised by African immigrants, are converting in growing numbers and slowly changing the face of religious affiliation in the overwhelmingly Christian country. "The numbers have gone up dramatically if you look at the census figures . . . there is massive growth especially in the (black) townships," said Dr Shamil Jeppie, an expert on Islamic history in Africa at the University of Cape Town . . . . But an estimated 75 000 Africans are now Muslim compared to fewer than 12 000 in 1991 during apartheid white rule, according to research by the Human Sciences Research Council, a government-funded institute.[119]

Converts to Islam for Nairobi area, Kenya.

Year	No. of Converts
2009	350
2008	520
2007	282
2006	548
2005	736
2004	1017
2003	1130
2002	849
2001	1181
2000	932
1999	714
1998	623
1997	869
1996	422
1995	227
1994	181
1993	129
1992	96
1991	53
1990	64

To get exhaustive conversion rate of my own country Kenya is equally hard. However, I got the privilege of accessing the records of the converts from Jamia Mosque Reverts Center in Nairobi. The center would offer a *certificate of reversion to Islam* to those who reported their conversions at its Center. Each certificate would detail important information such as the name of the person, the adopted name after conversion, date of conversion, sex and National Identification Number of the revertee, two witnesses, serial number of the certificate, signatures, e.t.c. The duplicate of the certificates would usually remain with Jamia mosque Reverts Center. Readers should note, however, that the data I got from Jamia Mosque Reverts Center is not representative of all converts to Islam in Kenya. The data represent only those reverts who *reported* their adoption of Islam at Jamia offices in Nairobi. It is emphatically assumed that most of these converts reside in or in close proximity to Nairobi and it is worth noting that of all the eight provinces in Kenya, Nairobi is the smallest province in terms of area. From the data, in a period between 1990 to 2009 (i.e. 20 year period), the number of people who

118. Itano, Nicole. "In South Africa, many blacks convert to Islam." The Christian Science Monitor 10 Jan. 2002.

119. Bell, Gordon. "Islam is spreading among black South Africans." Independent Online 14 Nov. 2004. <http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=139&art_id=qw1100423885802B264>;also see Paz, Reuven and Moshe Terdman.

"Islam's Inroads." The Journal of International Security Affairs Fall 2007, No. 13.

embraced Islam in the Nairobi area is 10 923. The provided table shows the number of converts from the year 1990 to 2009.

If you go to Singapore, you will read: ". . . About 500 people here convert to Islam each year. That has been the average since the 1990s, said the Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore."[120] *Brunei Times* report a greater number of ethnic Chinese enquiring about turning to Islam, with a greater number of Indonesian Chinese embracing Islam in the month of Ramadhan, every year.[121] And in a different edition, it reports that a total of 109 people became Muslims in the Tutong District from January to 22 December 2008.[122]

Then, there is *Israel News* reporting that:

> According to statistics from the Population Administration, 2006 will be a record year for Israeli Jews joining the Muslim religion. In the past few years, the number of conversions to Islam was relatively stable at 35 per year, but over 70 conversions were expected this year. In 2003, 40 Jews converted to Islam; in 2004 the number dropped to 27; and last year it stood at 33.[123]

Remarkably, in 2004, thirty-seven Korean soldiers converted to Islam ahead of their late July deployment to the Kurdish city of Irbil in northern Iraq. The *Chosun Iblo Korean News Agency* stated that:

> . . . at noon Friday, 37 members of the Iraq-bound "Zaitun Unit," including Lieutenant Son Hyeon-ju of the Special Forces 11th Brigade, made their way to a mosque in Hannam-dong, Seoul and held a conversion ceremony".[124]

Captain Son Jin-gu from Zaitoon Unit recites his *shahadah* at a mosque in Hannam-dong, Seoul on Friday.

120. Zainol, Vivi. "Singapore: 500 Convert To Islam Every Year." The Straits Times 22 Nov. 2003.

121. Rosli, Sobrina. "More people embrace Islam during holy month." The Brunei Times 30 Sept. 2007.

122. Begawan, Bandar Seri. "109 embrace Islam in Tutong." The Brunei Times 24 Dec. 2008

123. Palter, Nurit. "2006: More Jews converting to Islam." Israel News 13 July 2006. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3274735,00.html>

124."Ahead of Iraq Deployment, 37 Korean Troops Convert to Islam." The Chosun Iblo Korean News Agency 8 June 2004.<http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200405/200405280041.html> Also watch their conversions on this link (s) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awhV2zNo5LM >

Citing why Islam attracted them, one of these Korean soldiers said: "I became a Muslim because I felt Islam was more humanistic and peaceful than other religions. And if you can religiously connect with the locals, I think it could be a big help in carrying out our peace reconstruction mission."

Soldiers from Zaitun Unit pray at a mosque in Hannam-dong, Seoul on Friday.

The world-famous journal *The Economist* stated that "Russia'a fastest-growing religious group is its Muslims."[125] Professor Paul Goble is the Vice Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities at Concordia-Audentes University in Tallinn, Estonia, and he is unquestionably a leading specialist on ethnic minorities in the Russian Federation. He said that within the next several decades Russia will become a country with a Muslim majority.[126]

> Within most of our lifetimes the Russian Federation, assuming it stays within current borders, will be a Muslim country . . . . That is it will have a Muslim majority and even before that the growing number of people of Muslim background in Russia will have a profound impact on Russian foreign policy. The assumption in Western Europe or the United States that Moscow is part of the European concert of powers is no longer valid . . . . The Muslim growth rate, since 1989, is between 40 and 50 percent . . . . By 2015, Muslims will make up a majority of Russia's conscript army, and by 2020 a fifth of the population.

Goble says that in 1991 there were about 300 mosques in Russia. However, in 2006, it rose to 8,000. The number of Russians going on the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca each year has jumped from 40 in 1991 to 13,500 in 2005.

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125. "Russia's Muslims: A benign growth?" The Economist 7 April. 2007. p.25.

126. "Analyst Predicts Muslim Majority in Russia Within 30 Years." voanews.com 28 Feb. 2006. <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-02/2006-02-28-voa77.cfm?CFID=105873012&CFTOKEN=97671586&jsessionid=6630ffca3635a655cac662261fe3b18643c5 >; Also see Choudhury, Salah Uddin Shoaib. "Russia becoming a Muslim state!" Asian Tribune Mon, 22 May 2006.

Tamil Nadu is one of the 28 states of India. In a village in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu live a group of people referred to as Dalit. They are of South Asian descent traditionally regarded as untouchables or of low caste, who have been told by the upper castes of India that they are less than human. Cases of oppression, injustices, and ill-treatment against the Dalits are rampart. The Dalits thought Islam could be a solution to their sufferings. At this point, it's worth-noting that Islam scripturally crashes all types of racism, ethnicity, tribalism or supremacy based on color and birth. Hence the verse: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." [Q 49:13] and as Christians talk of the *Last Supper of Jesus*, Muslims talk of the *Last Sermon of Muhammad*. The Last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad included this important clause: "All mankind is [descended] from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab. A white man has no superiority over black nor a black over white, except on account of piety and good deeds."[127] Furthermore, Qur'an Chapter 49 verse 10 "The believers are but brothers. . . ." places belief in one God as the assimilating agent, and not race, wealth, nationality or popularity. No sane person can hesitate following a Prophet who said, "You are not better than people with red or black skins unless you excel them in piety."[128] Arnold Toynbee, a historian who believed that revival of religion is one of the keys to the salvation of Western civilization admitted that Islam can extinguish racial discrimination:

> The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue. The forces of racial toleration, which at present seem to be fighting a losing battle in a spiritual struggle of immense importance to mankind, might still regain the upper hand if any strong influence militating against racial consciousness were now to be thrown into the scales. It is conceivable that the spirit of Islam might be the timely reinforcement which would decide this issue in favor of tolerance and peace.[129]

Despite other Dalits embracing Islam in previous occasion, news went that an entire village desired to revert to Islam:

> All Dalits in the village intend converting to Islam," said the local panchayat president, Murthy, at S Keezhapatti. "The upper castes don't respect us and untouchability is a curse when it comes to eking out a living," he explained. As he pointed out, "If a Dalit opens a tea stall, caste Hindus stay away. But if he converts to Islam and opens the same tea stall, they come to the same place, to the 'bhai's tea stall'. There is no untouchability then." It is not the illiterate among the Dalits who feel that way. Even a post-graduate from the village says that conversion is the only way out to "buy social respect".[130]

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127. Musnad of Imam Ahmed # 19774; Also see AlMubarakpuri, SafiurRahman. ArRaheeq AlMakhtum (The Sealed Nectar). 1st ed. Riyadh: Maktaba DarusSalam, 1995. p.460.

128. Mishkat Al-Masabih, 5198 and transmitted by Ahmad.

129. Toynbee, Arnold J. Civilization on Trial. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948. pp. 205-206.

130. "Dalit villagers in Madurai to take to Islam" rediff.com 16 Jan. 2001. <http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/jan/16satya.htm>

For those who would like to work in Saudi Arabia or Arab countries and those who have friends/relatives in such countries will be thrilled to read from the Middle East's leading English language daily Newspaper *Arab News* dated 20 May 2006:

> As many as 4,200 expatriates of different nationalities have embraced Islam as a result of the activities of Islamic Education Foundation (IEF) in Alhamrah in the past 10 years, according to a press statement issued by IEF. About 40 percent of the converts were women, it said.[131]

Islamic Education Foundation (IEF) is supervised by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Propagation and Guidance. It is reported that in UAE, expatriates have converted to Islam, majorities are from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and a few from Western countries. One of the news sources disclose:

> The total number of those who have embraced Islam in the United Arab Emirates has reached the 10,000 mark, and a new center is now being built in which there would be four classrooms for men and a similar number for women, a lecture hall, administrative offices, and it is expected that it will also open branches in various other emirates of the UAE. Most of these converts embraced Islam due to efforts exerted by the Sheikh Zayed Center for New Converts.[132]

Let us pose for a moment. I am sure you have personally witnessed a case of conversion to Islam, either in your family, in your village/town/college or on the media. That is if you socialize with mankind and you are neither living in Mars nor Venus.

However, we should know that there are those converts who, due to one reason or the other, opt to remain anonymous. Only God knows them. They may be performing Islamic rituals in secrecy (and some doubt if Obama is a Christian). We cannot get the statistics of these undercover Muslims. Just like in Makkah before it was conquered by Muslims, there were some Muslim converts living in anonymity with the unbelievers of Makkah. Muhammad and his companions were heading to Makkah. Had a fight taken place between Muhammad's party and the Makkans, they might unwittingly have killed some of those Muslim converts, not known to them as Muslims, and thus suffered the anguish of shedding Muslim blood. Hence the verse:

> And if not for believing men and believing women (i.e. converts to Islam) whom you did not know – that you might trample [i.e., kill] them and there would befall you because of them dishonor without [your] knowledge – [you would have been permitted to enter Makkah]. [This was so] that Allah might admit to His mercy whom He willed. If they had been apart [from them], We would have punished those who disbelieved among them with painful punishment. [Q 48:25].

Thus, getting the statistics of all Muslim converts is *very hard* due to the cases of those who don't report their conversions. Fact: there is a rising tide of converts flowing to Islam. Period. To profile all these converts would require a voluminous encyclopedia. The point is home. That Islam is growing faster than any other religion. We anticipate a credible Muslim body which would come

131. P.K. Abdul Ghafour. "4,200 Embraced Islam Through IEF Programs." Arab News 20 May 2006; Also see P.K. Abdul Ghafour. "New Muslims on the rise in US after Sept. 11." Arab News 3 Nov. 2002.

132. "Converts in Emirates." Islamic Voice March 1999.

up with a yearly-based volume(s) profiling notable converts to Islam besides giving statistics on conversions. Probably, every country profiling her notable converts. The title might read something like *2009 Converts to Islam: Profiles of Notable Kenyan Converts*. For America, they would have something like *2009 Converts to Islam: Profiles of Notable American Converts.*

Have they not seen that Islam is dominating?

Read the following verse, and pretend to reflect on it.

> "Have they not seen that We (i.e. God) set upon the land (i.e. of the non-Muslims), *reducing* it from its borders? (i.e. through the spread of Islam) And Allah decides; there is no adjuster of His decision. And He is swift in account."
>
> [Q13:41]

The above Qur'anic verse may be termed, of course by Muslims, as a sign from God showing that His religion, as proven in contemporary times, will cover the places beyond Arabia. Thus reducing the globe into an Islamic world. Islamic global village! People are forced to convert to Islam at the point of an intellectual sword! The sword of Truth! De Lacy O'Leary in his book *Islam at the Crossroads* writes:

> History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.[133]

Muslims rejoice seeing the sword piercing through many including the innocent British Civil Contractor, Mr. Holt. He shares his experience:

> The sword of Islam is not the sword of steel. I know this by experience, because the sword of Islam struck deep into my own heart. It didn't bring death, but it brought a new life; it brought an awareness and it brought an awakening as to who am I and what am I and for what am I here?

Mr. Holt embraced Islam in 1975.

Why would all these people accept Islam if it's not the religion of truth? Arthur Schopenhauer once said, "All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident." History is fraught with events of men and women ridiculing Islam and aggressively fighting Islam. However, Islam has also seen its ridiculers; its opposers accept the very religion. Omar Ibn Khattaab is a case in point. He was the most feared, well built man with a frightening height and a Muslim antagonist of Makka. Angry and pissed off by the message of Muhammad, Omar set his way to openly kill Prophet Muhammad. But he returned home a Muslim convert.

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133. O'Leary, De Lacy. Islam at the Crossroads. London: 1923. p.8; Another non-Muslim, A.S. Tritton writes: "The picture of the Muslim soldier advancing with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other is quite false." See Tritton, A.S. Islam. London: 1951. p. 21.

If life is about trying things to see if they work, then these converts have tried Islam and found enormous benefits. Muslims will ask those who haven't embraced Islam: "Why not follow the trend and be part of the group? Why do you hesitate?" How I wish people would take an initiative to objectively search the true religion. For those who would make the decision of embracing Islam, don't hesitate telling us your story. Who knows, we may add your profile in the second edition of this book. God willing.

The witnessing of non-Muslims from all corners of the earth exponentially embracing Islam is heralded as the beginning of Islamic planetory domination. The prospect of more and more newsworthy figures converting to Islam en masse should never be dismissed. It won't be a surprise if we encounter from news media something like:

> Breaking News. The Pope has converted to Islam and changed name to Muhammad. Today, the Pope called upon the world's 1.1 billion Roman Catholics to embrace Islam. The Pope was seen to be greatly distressed seeing Jews and Christians still wallow in misguidance. "In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground." [Luke 22:44] Hoping that the Jews and Christians will eventually embrace Islam, the pope prayed saying, "Guide us to the straight path –The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray." [Q 1:6-7]. We will give you more update when new developments unfold. This is your authoritative news channel, ...

Reducing Agent

"A church uncertain of its faith is endangered by conversion to Islam." [134]

~ Alain Besançon.
A member of the Institut de France and a synod participant.

Five minus three is two. John has five apples and Salim has three apples; if Salim takes two apples from John, John's stock of apples will be reduced to three while Salim's increase to five. A Christian family of five members will be reduced to four if one embraces Islam thereby adding a new Muslim to the Muslim community. Maybe we should take real figures. It has been reported that 20 000 Americans turn to Islam every year. In five years time, if such figures remain constant, Islam will increase by 100 000 and Christianity reduce by 100 000. These reversions to Islam mean that there is a dramatic increase in the Muslim population while Christian population simultaneously suffer a dramatic decline. Anyone with elementary knowledge of math will not find it hard to conclude that in a decades's time, because of these conversions to Islam, there would be an upsurge of the world Muslim population and a dramatic decrease of non-Muslim population.

A reducing agent is a substance capable of bringing about the reduction of another substance as it itself is oxidized. In chemistry, Reduction is a term which refers to loss of oxygen and Oxidation as gain of oxygen. When one becomes a Muslim he gets a new life just as the way oxygen is equated with life. When a new soul/life is won into Islam, it means the other religion has lost one person. As Islam gets "oxidized" by converts it can qualify to be known as a strong reducing

134. Allen Jr., John L. "Europe's Muslims Worry Bishops." National Catholic Reporter 22 Oct. 1999.

agent. Reducing agents remove oxygen from another substance. Islam is winning souls from the surge of conversions while Christianity remains without oxygen/followers. Perhaps, the Qur'an instructs us to ponder on this issue: "Have they not seen that We set upon the land (i.e. of the non-Muslims), *reducing* it from its borders? (i.e. through the spread of Islam) And Allah decides; there is no adjuster of His decision. And He is swift in account." [Q13:41].

Are Christians an endangered species? A Muslim scholar would say yes and proceed to scriptural evidence that before the end of the world Jesus would descend and join the Muslims and will slay the Jews and the unsubmiting Christians. Some Christians would embrace Islam and those refusing will be executed. Jesus would lead a hunt for the Christians and if they don't believe in Islam they would be killed. Why can't he kill the Christians when such intentions and motives are seen from his terror-laden statements: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword" [Matthew 10:34]. Jesus and his followers being the minority facing the dominant Roman Empire and the Jews, they did not have the opportunity to execute their antagonists. However, when he comes back he will join the coalition of Muslims and force the defiant Christians and Jews to either choose Islam or the aforementioned sword. Like the way Jesus asked his disciples to get weapons, he can as well order the Muslims saying ". . . he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" [Luke 22:36] so that they behead the non-Muslims. No one will be left on the face of the earth except that he will be a Muslim. "And there is none from the People of the Scripture (i.e. Jews and Christians) but that he will surely believe in him [i.e., Jesus] before his death (i.e. at his second coming). And on the Day of Resurrection he (Jesus) will be against them a witness." [Q 4:159]. Hence those Jews or Christians who don't believe in Jesus (i.e. become Muslim) will be slain. This makes sense since Muhammad prophesized that one of Jesus' duties in the second coming is to abolish *Jizya* (Tax remitted by non-Muslim to the ruling Islamic State). Thus in Jesus time, there will be no non-Muslim to pay the tax. According to *Doomsday: Potents and Prophesies*, Veliankode writes: "This will not be accepted by Jesus, but all people will be required to embrace Islam and there will be no other alternative."[135] You are either a Muslim exempted from *Jizya* or face death.[136] No tolerance, no co-existence, no bridge-building. I am sure some are now wallowing in disbelief, "Is Jesus an extremist just like some of these Muslims?"

I certainly side with Benjamin Franklin that "there is no little enemy." Secondly, we have to know that the world has two types of enemies; the enemy of good and the enemy of evil. During colonialism, the Africans who fought for their lands were enemies of the invaders whereas the colonialists were portrayed as enemies by the indigenous. What do we call someone who protects the right of existence of a witch? An enemy of good. And what do we call the person who calls for the execution of a witch? An enemy of evil, right? The Bible acknowledges the existence of enemies in this life and we will find that in I Samuel 24:4, "The men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, "I will give your *enemy* into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you." We even see David supplicating to God with the words "for you are my refuge, a strong tower against the *enemy*." [Psalm 63:3] The Qur'an says "Indeed, Satan is an *enemy* to you; so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze." [Q 35:6] and of course Satan has supporters from mankind and hence there will always be enemies

135. Veliankode, Sidheeque M.A. Doomsday: Portents and Prophesies. Scarborough: Al-Ahique Publishers Inc., 1999. p. 358.

136. Audio lecture series, "The Signs of the Hour" by Sheikh Muhammad Swaleh Munajid.

on earth. The Qur'an shows how to shield oneself with the enemy: "And if there comes to you from Satan an evil suggestion, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing." [Q 41:36] When that's known, we can now heed the advice of Ulysses S. Grant:"The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike him as hard as you can, and keep moving." If a certain people come up with a system whose goal is for the rich to be richer and the poor to be poorer, then they are clear enemies of good. Any system with the ideology of 'all-for-ourselves-and-nothing-or-little-for-others' is a clear enemy for mankind. Interest/usury is a major cause of poverty and any system that practices interest is no doubt an enemy to welfare. In short, there is the enemy of God and the enemy of Satan. God gives His commandments and Satan gives his commandments. When mankind decides to suppress the government of God they become nothing but enemies of God. Wars and confrontations between the party of God and the party of Satan is inevitable. The true religion will always be in a constant war with enemies of good and the false religion will always wage jihad against the enemies of evil. That's God's design of life on earth. Hence, we should not be shocked to hear that Muhammad participated in 27 battles. And we should not be shocked to learn that Jesus will kill the unbelievers on his second coming. In fact, his military ambitions against the enemies of God had been revealed in his statement, ". . . he who has no *sword*, let him sell his garment and buy one." [Luke 22:36] Improvising on Jesus command, someone at this age and time may put it in this way: "he who has no weapon, let him sell his car and buy an AK-47 and an M67 grenade and maybe when you get more money, a nuclear weapon!" Some religions engage in wars for oil, others enter into war for God's name. Barack Obama says, "I don't oppose all wars. What I am opposed to is a dumb war. What I am opposed to is a rash war." And I have never come to think that fighting for God is a dumb thing. Moreover, God is not only Good but Just. That's why he created Hell in the hereafter and He also made non-believers wallow in distress and misery on earth.

Anyone well versed in the Bible will acknowledge that Joshua was a man of God. However, under Joshua's leadership, the Israelites invaded Canaan and killed twelve thousand people "both men and women" [Joshua 8:25] because the God of the Bible wanted that! Now, is there any Christian out there who is brave enough to accuse God of terrorism* because according to Joshua 8:1-2, ". . . the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear or be dismayed; take all the fighting men with you, and go up now to Ai. See, I have handed over to you the king of Ai with his people, his city, and his land. You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king; only its spoil and its livestock you may take as booty for yourselves. *Set an ambush against the city, behind it.*" [Joshua 8:1-2] And what about God saying "Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." [1 Samuel 15:3] We should not forget the encouragement for mass murder of Babylonian babies in Psalms 137:8-9 where it is written, "O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, Happy the one who repays you as you have served us! Happy the one who takes and dashes Your little ones against the rock!"

*For additional examples of the commandment to kill and cast terror into the hearts of disbelievers see Numbers 21:2-3; 21:34-35; 24:8; 24:19-20; Deuteronomy 2:34; 3:2-6; 3:21; 7:1-2; 7:16; 7:23-24; 9:3; 11:24-25; 20:16-17; 31:3-5; 33:27; Joshua 2:10; 6:21; 8:2; 8:24-26; 10:1; 10:28; 10:35;10:37; 10:39-40; 11:11-14; 11:20-21; Judges 1:17; 3:29; 1 Samuel 15:8; 15:15; 15:18; 15:20; 1 Chronicles 4:41; Psalm 21:9-10.

Some may want to find excuses by saying that all this terror is only sanctioned in the Old Testament. Assuming that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" [John 1:1], and assuming that Jesus statement ". . . before Abraham was, I AM" [John 8:58] are evidences that Jesus is God and that he existed before mankind, then we may ask: Does that mean that your 'good and loving' God (i.e. Jesus part of the Triune) did sanction killings in the Old Testament . . . I mean Jesus (God-son) was around and he didn't prevent God-Father or Holy Ghost from issuing such a barbaric command? For those who don't believe Jesus to be God, still we may ask: Did the God of the Old Testament who was extremely merciless change overnight to be a Merciful God in the New Testament and can He change back to a Wrathful God? My point is crystal clear: violence or killing is absolutely fine if it's sanctioned by God. But before we get this divine authority to kill, we need to investigate the scriptures (Bible/Qur'an) whether they are truly the word of God and not Satan.

Muslims would ask: Do you want to embrace Islam before Jesus comes or you want to wait until he comes to point a sword on you for you to be Muslim? The burden of choice is on you. Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said:

> There is no prophet between me and him, that is, Jesus. He will descent (to the earth). When you see him, recognise him: a man of medium height, reddish fair, wearing two light yellow garments, looking as if drops were falling down from his head though it will not be wet. He will fight the people for the cause of Islam. He will break the cross, kill swine, and abolish jizyah. *Allah will perish all religions except Islam.* He will destroy the Antichrist and will live on the earth for forty years and then he will die.* The Muslims will pray over him.[137]

Let's assume we won't live to see Jesus second coming with the sword. But have we not witnessed another "sword" which is slowly but surely rolling Christianity into extinction? The sword of conversions! After witnessing the explosion in conversions to Islam, one thrilled-to-death non-Muslim had to send an alarming message to his people saying: "You guys got to understand a suicide bomber . . . usually kills one generation. Conversion kills all future generations."

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*Muslims believe Jesus Christ was never crucified and that God could not allow His favorite Messenger to be killed in such a shameful death hence Jesus ascended to heaven before he could be captured by the Roman soldiers. The crucifixion makes a God whose ". . . Mercy endures forever." [2 Chronicles 7:3] become a non-loving God. Hence the Qur'an clearly states: ". . . but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise." [Qur'an 4:157-158] Dr. Laurence Brown on page 204 of his scholarly book Mis'Goded evidences the fact that some early Christians didn't believe that Jesus was crucified: "Among early Christians, the Corinthians, the Basilidians, the Paulicians, the Cathari and the Carpocratians all believed Jesus Christ's life was spared. The Basilidians believed that Simon of Cyrene was crucified in his place, which may not be an unreasonable suggestion, considering that Simon carried Jesus' cross (see Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21 and Luke 23:26). Typically, all of the dissenting sects mentioned above were judged to have been Gnostics and/or heretics by the church, and were violently suppressed by a Trinitarian majority that systematically burned dissenters into oblivion for the first fifteen centuries of Catholic rule (the most recent roasting having taken place in Mexico in 1850 CE)."

137. Abu Dawud Bk. 32, No. 4310; According to Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 55, No. 657, Prophet Muhammad said, "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, surely (Jesus,) the son of Mary will soon descend amongst you and will judge mankind justly (as a Just Ruler); he will break the Cross and kill the pigs and there will be no Jizya (i.e. taxation taken from non Muslims). Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it, and a single prostration to Allah (in prayer) will be better than the whole world and whatever is in it." Also see Bukhari Vol. 3, Bk. 43, No. 656; Bukhari Vol. 3, Bk. 34, No.425; Muslim Bk. 1, No. 287; Muslim Bk. 1, No. 289.

Global Religion

"Thanks to your democratic laws, we will invade you. Thanks to our religious laws, we will dominate you." [138]

~ A Muslim leader talking to Archbishop Giuseppe Bernardini.

Technically Muhammad's religion was engineered to dominate all corners of the globe whereas Jesus message, in theory and practice, had to be an ethnic message. Islam is poised to become the world religion thanks to these ensuing factors. We will compare and contrast the two major religions of the world in view of the following tools of a global religion:

a) Divine Decree to go Global

God authorized Islam to be a religion without borders when He proclaimed, "And We (i.e. God) have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the *worlds*." [Q21:107]. Also by saying: "And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to *all mankind*, but most of men know not." [Q 34:28] Elsewhere, it has been reported that Muhammad said ". . . I have been sent to all mankind and the line of prophets is closed with me."[139] In another narration, Prophet Muhammad said, "I have been given five things which were not given to any Prophet before me, and I do not say it out of pride. I was sent to all mankind (their) black and white alike. . . ."[140]

On the other hand, God sanctioned Jesus to be an ethnic Messenger through the royal decree pronounced by Jesus himself, "But He (Jesus) answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[Mathew 15:24]. The chief priests and scribes knew from the scriptures that Jesus shall be a messenger to the people of Israel. They quoted the verse, "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd *my people Israel*." [Mathew 2:6]. If Jesus were a universal messenger they would have quoted ". . . a ruler who is to shepherd the people of the world". To clarify the matter, Jesus said, ". . . Hear, *O Israel*, the Lord our God, the Lord is one" [Mark 12:29]. Jesus didn't say "hear O people of the *world*". Whereas in the Qur'an God instructs, "Say, [O Muhammad], "O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah *to you all*, [from Him] to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity except Him; He gives life and causes death." So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him that you may be guided." [Q 7:158]. And why would Jesus choose twelve disciples had it not been for each disciple to preach to one of the twelve tribes of Israel? When the son of man sits on the throne of His glory, will Jesus' disciples judge all the tribes of the world which include the Maasai, the Zulu, the Indians, the Europeans . . .

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138. Allen Jr., John L. "Europe's Muslims Worry Bishops." National Catholic Reporter 22 Oct. 1999.

139. Muslim Bk. 4, No. 1062.

140. Ahmad 1:301; Also see Fath Al-Bari 8:153; Al-Mubarakpuri, SaifurRahman. Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged). Riyadh: Darus-salam Publishers, 2000.Vol. 4. p. 182-184; Abdul Rahman, Muhammad Saed. The Meaning and Explanation of the Glorious Qur'an. Vol. 3. London: MSA Publication Limited, 2008. p.352. According to Bukhari Vol. 1, Bk. 7, No. 331, Prophet Muhammad said, "Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to all mankind." And according to Muslim Bk. 4, No. 1058, The Prophet said: "I have been conferred upon five (things) which were not granted to anyone before me (and these are): Every apostle wasn't particularly to his own people, whereas I have been sent to all the red and the black . . . ." Also see, Bukhari Vol. 1, Bk. 8, No. 429.

and the 100 uncontacted tribes in the world as estimated by Survival International? Or Did Jesus say "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."? [Mathew 19:28] All these evidences show that his message was limited only to the people of Israel and if you have taken him as your personal savior, we are afraid that he might tell you, ". . . It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." [Mathew 15:26]

In fact, the first place Islam was practiced outside of the Arabian Peninsula was in Africa. This happened in the seventh century when prophet Muhammad advised a number of his early disciples, who were facing persecution to seek refuge across the Red Sea in the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia (modern day Ethiopia). Muhammad did not say to his departing disciples anything like "Do not proselytize in Abyssinia." Whereas, Jesus cautioned his disciples as reported in the Bible: "These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." [Mathew 10:5-6]

b) Ambassadors

The movement that intends to cross geographical boundaries unleashes competent ambassadors throughout the world. Because Islam was a global religion, Muhammad had no choice but to send religious ambassadors namely Muadh Bin Jabal and Abu Musa al-Ash'ary all the way from Saudi Arabia to Yemen so as to spread Islam in that country.

Jesus, on the other hand, being watchful on his religious boundary, he ordered his disciples cautioning, ". . . do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." [Mathew 10:5-6]. By show of example, there is no record of Jesus converting a gentile but he in fact rebuked a gentile who sought his favors [Mathew 15:22-28 and Mark 7:25-30]. In short, Jesus never sent ambassadors outside his geographical demarcation.

c) Diplomats

"I want to send some of you to the rulers of foreign lands but don't dispute with me as the Israelites disputed with Jesus, the son of Mary."[141]

~ Muhammad addressing his companions on the verge of sending them as envoys beyond Arabia.

"O Prophet of God, we shall carry out whatever you wish, send us wherever you desire."[142]

~ The Companions of Muhammad responded.

The universality of Islam was witnessed when Muhammad sent letters to the Kings of his time

141. Hamid, Abdul Wahid. Companions of the Prophet. Vol.1. New rev. ed. Leicester: Muslim Education & Literary Services, 1998.p.8.

142. Hamid, Abdul Wahid. Companions of the Prophet. Vol.1. New rev. ed. Leicester: Muslim Education & Literary Services, 1998.p.8.

inviting them to Islam. Muhammad sent letters to Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantines (Eastern Roman Empire); Chosroes II, Emperor of Persian Empire; Negus, King of Abyssinia; Muqawqis, Ruler of Egypt; Harith Gassani, Governor of Syria; Al-Mundhir bin Sawa, Ruler of Bahrain; Hurmuz, who belonged to the Iranian royal family; Jaifer and 'Abd, rulers of Oman; letter to the kings of the Himyar; Pope of Rome; Ukaidir, ruler of Dumat-ul-jandal (currently Jauf whose inhabitants were Christians).[143]

Why would Muhammad invite the rulers of different kingdoms to accept Islam, if he wasn't a global Prophet? Were Prophet Muhammad alive today, maybe he would invite President of America, Mr. Barrack Obama; the President of Russia, Mr. Dmitry Medvedev; the head of state of the United Kingdom, Queen Elizabeth II; President of China, Mr. Hu Jintao; the President of Kenya, Mr. Mwai Kibaki . . . and their ilk to accept Islam. The prophet's letter to president Barrack Obama might be something like this:

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

From Muhammad bin Abdullah, the Messenger of God, to Mr. Barrack Hussein Obama, the President of United States of America.

Peace be upon him who follows the Guidance. I call you to Islam. Accept Islam and you will be safe. God will give you your reward double-fold. If you forsake the message of God, you shall be responsible for misguiding the Americans.

Say: "O People of the Book (Jews and Christians)! Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah. If then they turn back, say ye:"Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will).

143. Heraclius was the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire [610-641] who captured Syria, Palestine, and Egypt from Persia [613-628]). Muhammad's letter to the Emperor of Rome was as follows: "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. (This letter is) from Muhammad bin Abdullah, the slave and Messenger of God, to Heraclius the Emperor of Rome. Peace be upon him who follows the guidance. I call you to Islam, embrace Islam and you will be safe; embrace Islam and Allah will bestow on you a double reward. But if you reject this invitation of Islam, you shall be responsible for misguiding the peasants (i.e. your nation). {Say: "O People of the Book (Jews and Christians)! Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah. If then they turn back, say ye:"Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)}. [Q 3:64.] References for the correspondences see Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 52, No. 191; Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 52, No. 187; Bukhari Vol. 6, Bk. 60, No. 75; Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 52, No. 189; Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 52, No. 190; Muslim Bk. 24, No. 5217; Ibn al-Qayyim, Za'ad al-Ma'ad, Vol. III, p. 60; Za'ad al-Ma'ad, 3/61,62; Ibn Sa'd, Kitab at-Tabaqat, Vol. III, p. 15; At-Tabari at-Tareekh Vol 111, p.90; al-Mubarakpuri (2002) p.420; Muhadarat Tareekh Al-Umam Al-Islamiyah 1/146; Fath Al-Bari 8/127.1281; Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.p.49; Hamid, Abdul Wahid. Companions of the Prophet. Vol.1. New rev. ed. Leicester: Muslim Education & Literary Services, 1998.p.8.

d) Massive procreation

Islam has a system of becoming a world religion through its 'unlimited babies policy'. As if sex is for procreation, Muslim men are exhorted to make love to their wives so as to make babies. The Qur'an says : "So now have sexual relations with them and seek that which Allâh has ordained for you (i.e. offspring) . . . ." [Q 2:187]. The Prophet said: "Marry women who are loving and *very prolific*, for I shall *outnumber* the peoples by you."[144] In a one on one advice to his disciple, Muhammad - after teaching how to have a romantic moment with a woman - emphasized, "(O Jabir!) Seek to have offspring, seek to have offspring!"[145] No wonder Osama Bin Laden who is known to have 19 children is the 17th of 53 children in his family. This 'make-as-many-children-as-possible' culture is a useful strategy for Islam to be the superpower of the world. Muslims are not afraid of a baby boom as their God has secured them in the verse: "And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin." [Q17:31].

A non-Muslim couple could close down their baby-manufacturing company after having three kids whereas for a Muslim couple, seven kids might not be enough to complete the family. Buttressed with polygamy a Muslim man with four wives can have 24 kids considering each wife bears 6 children. Indeed, such a man ought to be given a pat on the back for getting multiple women pregnant. Four women multiply by six children, those are 24 new Muslims with the capacity to exhibit and propagate Islam to the world. The non-Muslim woman is dreaded with the thought of urinating 80 times a day during pregnancy and the thought of six painful uterine contractions during birth and sometimes oxytocin is given in the labor ward to induce labor! Scaring enough, an episiotomy i.e. a cut is given at the side of the vulva to facilitate delivery of the baby. Let alone the postpartum difficulties such as painful urination, disaster passing your first postpartum poop, pains in pelvic joints, perineal pain, postpartum backache, bleeding and scabbing, difficulties with breastfeeding, over concerned about stretch marks while others suffer from the baby blues, postpartum depression, postpartum psychosis. These and other 'crazy' moments make some women have suicidal thoughts. These thoughts are enough for these non-Muslim women to say, "No more babies." Those who have gone through childbirth know what am talking about. But for the Muslim women whose *intention* is to produce many babies so as to please Prophet Muhammad, the whole pregnancy thing becomes a form of worship and the pains involved is taken as a pleasurable moment loaded with God-given rewards. After all, there is nothing to worry about maternal mortality because a Muslim woman who dies while delivering a baby is considered as a martyr meaning that Eternal Paradise shall be her reward. This conviction is derived from Prophet Muhammad's saying, ". . . the woman who dies with a child in her womb is a martyr."[146]

Islam has the manpower to globalize its religion. China is feared to be the next super power. For every 5 people in the world one is Chinese, why should they not threaten the world? China has the world largest population with *1,321,851,888* people (as per July 2007 est.). With the current 1.57 billion Muslims in the world, if they adhere to the prophetic wish to populate the world, it will not be long for the inhabitants of the planet to be influenced by Islam. More Muslims means non-Muslims will definitely interact with them, causing the non-Muslim to learn about Islam or

144. Abu Dawud Bk. 5, No. 2045.

145. Bukhari Vol. 7, Bk. 62, No. 173.

146. Ahmad 5/315; Also see Maalik 1/233; Abu Dawood 3/482.

just fall in love with a Muslim hence converting to Islam for marriage.

According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the World Christian Database as of 2007 estimated the fastest growing of the five largest religions in the world by percentage to be Islam (1.84%). High birth rates were cited as the reason for the growth.[147] If - in the western/Christian world - men are marrying men, women marrying women, couples aborting and contracepting, women liberated from the pain of child birth, do you think they will outnumber a religion that strictly prohibits same sex relationships, anti-family programs, celibacy, monasticism, castration and other man-made rulings. No wonder, The PRI (The Population Research Institute) spokesman Joseph D'Agostino said to *OneNewsNow*: "It's because Christian and Jews are refusing to have children, refusing to get married, [and] having such low birth rates that the Muslims are going to inherit the Earth"[148] In France, ". . . the birthrate of immigrant Muslims remains three to four times higher than that of non-Muslim French, which is estimated at 1.3 percent . . . ."[149] While in UK, (GAD) Government Actuary's Department published data showing trends of their population growth. The average birthrate for British-born women is 1.6 and for foreign-born women 2.2. The highest birthrate in the UK is among Pakistani-born women (of course Muslims), who have an average of 4.7 children each.[150] To show the impact of Prophet Muhammad's encouragement for Muslim baby boom, on 30 January 2009, *The Times* reported that:

> The Muslim population in Britain has grown by more than 500,000 to 2.4 million in just four years, according to official research . . . . The population multiplied 10 times faster than the rest of society, the research by the Office for National Statistics reveals . . . . Experts said that the increase was attributable to immigration, a higher birthrate and conversions to Islam during the period of 2004-2008, when the data was gathered.[151]

In India, according to official sources:

> The total fertility Rate (TFR) is 3.4 children per woman. . . Muslims have considerably higher fertility than any other religious group. Muslim women have a TFR of 4.4, which is 1.1 children higher than the TFR for Hindu women.[152]

And according to the *ABC News*, "The American Muslim birthrate is about 4.5 children per couple, versus the 1.9 child per couple national average."[153] Another demographic indicator is the percentage of the under 25 age group. No one doubts that the west's population is top-heavy, (i.e., the ratio of youth to elderly is low) and that of Muslim has more youths. For instance, while people sixteen or younger make up about 20% of the population of Britain, amongst the Pakistani Muslim minority, that figure is nearly 40%. In practical terms, Europe's population is getting

147. Staff (May 2007). "The List: The World's Fastest-Growing Religions." Foreign Policy Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

148. Cole, Ethan. "Muslims Could Overtake Western World with High Birth Rates." Christian Today 4 Feb. 2007.

149. Gurfinkiel, Michel. "Islam in France: The French Way of Life Is in Danger" Middle East Quarterly. March 1997.

150. Leapman, Ben (Home Affairs Correspondent). "UK population could soar to 90m." Telegraph 25 Nov. 2007.

151. Kerbaj, Richard. "Muslim population 'rising 10 times faster than rest of society." The Times 30 Jan. 2009.

152. K.M. Mathew, ed.: Manorama Yearbook 1996. p.458-459.

153. Seitz, Barr. "Fastest-Growing Religion Often Misunderstood." BICNews. ABC. 13 Dec. 1997.

older - many more elderly and far fewer births hence the young Muslim populations will reproduce and perpetuate the increase of Muslims on a percentage basis in the near future. Generation next who would rule the world. It is said that "whoever has youth has the future" and the European Commissioner Fritz Bolkestein described demography as the "mother of politics." One is left to wonder, was this man called Muhammad a political genius when he exhorted Muslims to make extra babies?

World renowned Islamic scholar Bernard Lewis prognosed that: "Current trends allow only one conclusion . . . Europe is being Islamicized." And the German author Henryk M. Broder on 12 October 2006 told the Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant* that young Europeans who love freedom, better emigrate since Europe as they know it will no longer exist in 20 years time. *The Brussels Journal* writes:

> One does not have to be prophetic to predict, like Henryk Broder, that Europe is becoming Islamic. Just consider the demographics. The number of Muslims in contemporary Europe is estimated to be 50 million. It is expected to double in twenty years. By 2025, one third of all European children will be born to Muslim families. Today Mohammed is already the most popular name for new-born boys in Brussels, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and other major European cities.[154]

The Princeton historian, Bernard Lewis, knows that Europe will become an Islamic continent. Why would he say, "Current trends show that Europe will have a Muslim majority by the end of the twenty-first century at the latest . . . Europe will be part of the Arab West—the Maghreb." But Muslims don't require historians like Lewis or futurists to tell them about the future of Islam. Muhammad, their Prophet had *already* prophesied that, "This matter (i.e., Islam) will reach as far as the day and night reach, and Allah will not leave any house of mud/brick or tent (i.e. No City nor remote area) but He will bring this religion into it . . . and Allah will bring glory to Islam and humiliation to kufr (disbelief)."[155] My relative, a seriously polyginous man, was a father of not less than 53 kids. You would visit his resident and mistake it for a nursery school only to wallow in shock finding out that all those kids are a one man's efforts. It is known that Europe possesses an economy with a gross domestic product (GDP) totaling over $10 trillion, compared to GDP totaling $1.4 trillion for the Middle East. The question is: Will an Islamic Europe inherit Europe's vast banking, technological and manufacturing capabilities which would help launch Islamic domination to Mars for instance?

According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* of the year 2006, there were 2.13 billion Christians compared to 1.3 billion Muslims but currently the figure is not less than 1.57 billion Muslims. And we know that every Muslim is by default a proselytizer, in line with the Qur'anic verse, "You (i.e. Muslims) are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah." [Q 3:110]. Also the command: "Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. . . ." [Q 16:125]. These 1.5 billion Muslim missionaries ("fishers of men") are further motivated by colossal undiminishing reward told by Muhammad: "He who called (people) to righteousness

154. Belien, Paul. "The Rape of Europe." Brussels Journal 25 Oct. 2006. <http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/1609>; Also see Caldwell, Christopher. "Islamic Europe?" The Weekly Standard.4 Oct. 2004. Volume 10, Issue 4.

155. Ahmad 16998 and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, 32. Also see Mishkat Al-Masabih 42.

(i.e. Islam), there would be reward (assured) for him like the rewards of those who adhered to it, without their rewards (i.e. of those who embraced Islam) being diminished in any respect."[156] And indeed, a candle loses nothing by lighting another candle. Omar M. Ahmed, chairman of the board of CAIR (Council on American- Islamic Relations) once preached before a packed crowd at the Flamingo Palace banquet hall on Peralta Boulevard, "I urge Muslims not to shirk their duty of sharing the Islamic faith with those who are on the wrong side . . . If you choose to live here (in America), you have a responsibility to deliver the message of Islam. Islam isn't here to be equal to any other faith but to become dominant."[157] With this in perspective, aren't we scared that the high birth rate of Muslims will produce a burgeoning population of Muslim Evangelicals causing non-Muslims to embrace Islam in droves? It was in 1974 (thirty five years ago), when Algerian President Houari Boumedienne spoke before the General Assembly of the United Nations saying:

> One day millions of men will leave the southern hemisphere of this planet to burst into the northern one. But not as friends. Because they will burst in to conquer, and they will conquer by populating it with their children. Victory will come to us from the wombs of our women.[158]

Is it possible that Muslims heeded the biblical advice to populate the world? Will Muslims be loved by God because they listened and acted upon God's command: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth?" [Genesis 1:28]

e) <u>Non-Arab disciples and reverts</u>

Salman Farsi, a Persian Christian was one of Muhammad's disciples.[159] Abdullah ibn Salam, a Jewish Rabbi was one of early converts to Islam and a disciple of Prophet Muhammad.[160] Other reverts included Waraqah ibn Nawfal, the old, blind Christian, the Negus, the Christian ruler of Abyssinia who accepted Islam without ever having met Muhammad,[161] Bilal a black man once a slave who was emancipated by Islam was unquestionably one of the loyal disciples of Prophet Muhammad. The other disciple is Suhaib, the Byzantine Roman. Hence, of all the Muslims in the world, only about 15% to 20% are Arabs. It is amazing that there are more Indian Muslims than Arab Muslims, more Indonesian Muslims than Indian Muslims and probably more African Muslims than European Muslims!

Whereas a Sunday school student will easily assert that none of Jesus' disciples was a Persian, Black, British, or Chinese. The unwitnessed, self-proclaimed 'Road-to-Damascus-conversion' does not hold water for Satan can transform into a saint-looking image.

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156. Muslim Bk. 34, No. 6470; Muslim Bk. 34, No. 6466.

157. Gardiner, Lisa. "American Muslim Leader Urges Faithful to Spread Word." <u>San Ramon Valley Herald</u> 4 July 1998; Also see Miles, Austin. "Public Schools Embrace Islam - A Shocker!" <u>Daily Catholic</u> 14 Jan. 2002. Vol. 13 no. 6.

158. Fallaci, Oriana. <u>The Force of Reason</u>. New York: Rizzoli, 2006.p.56

159. Musnad Ahmad

160. <u>Encyclopaedia Judaica</u>. 1971. Vol 2. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd. p. 54.

161. Ibn Hisham. As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah.

f) Mixed-Raced Marriages

"Race is an issue that I believe this nation cannot afford to ignore right now."

~ Barrack Obama

Muhammad is not an ethnic prophet and he himself pioneered the universality of his religion by marrying a Jew named Swafiyah bint Huyayy. Imagine Muhammad being an Arab marrying a Jew! By breaking the barriers of race and background that divide mankind, Muhammad facilitated the universality of Islam. In a milieu where being a slave or of non-Arab tribe is equated with lower status and ranking, Muhammad, the Messenger of God was to correct such man-made standards by allowing interracial marriages to thrive. Prophet Muhammad married an Arab woman Zaynab bint Jahsh to Zayd ibn Haarithah, a freed slave, and he also married Faatimah bint Qays al-Qurashiyyah, an Arab to Usaamah the son of a freed slave, Zayd ibn Haarithah.[162] You may have heard some declare that blacks are genetically inferior to whites; they sometimes become object of suspicion and arrest because of driving while black, flying while black and even hailing while black; and never forgetting the negative connotations associated with the word 'black' such as black magic, blackmail, black ball, black sheep, black list, black mark, black hole, black water, black economy, black money, black Tuesday, black out and black death; the black man may even subliminally believe that white is right and "if it ain't white it ain't right"; these and more will piteously drive the poor black man live with "my skin is my sin" attitude which may induce him to commit suicide. However, at the time of Prophet Muhammad, a black man named Bilal ibn Rabah who was also a favorite disciple of Prophet Muhammad married Halal bint Awf, sister of the famous Qura'ish military leader and Muslim hero Abdrahman bint Awf, who was an Arab. Living in a community where a racially downtrodden person can sexually intermingle with the upper class is indeed a fortunate place to be. These inter-race marriages help incorporate other races to be part of Islam. This proves that Islam is a religion that transcends racial barriers. On the other hand neither Moses' nor Jesus disciples were gentiles and there is no record of intermarriages during Jesus period. We also found that some of the new Muslims listed in this book encountered Islam through inter-racial marriages.

One of the reasons why Obama's victory was welcomed by not only Americans but by most countries of the World is the courtesy of Obamas blend of races facilitated by his Luo Father and his white American mother. From Kansas, USA, to Birmingham, England, to Shanghai, China, to Kogello, Kenya, to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to Moscow, Russia, to Melbourne Australia, they all welcomed the biracial president. Others have even elevated Obama to the position of the *first global president*. And indeed, Obama's inauguration commanded global television audiences. Conversely, Muhammad was an Arab who married a Jew. He asked his black disciple to marry an Arab. Why shouldn't this cosmopolitan Islam be appealing to the multiracial globe? Muslims would wonder: "Is Muhammad not the First and Last Global Messenger?"

162. Muslim, Book 9, No. 3512.

g) Inter-Religious Marriages

In Islam, it is allowed for a Muslim man to marry the people of the book (e.g. Christians and Jews). This will allow the Muslim husband practice his faith while the Christian wife practices her faith. The logic of such marriage is that soon or later, the wife might willingly adopt the faith of the husband. The marriage would act as a platform for the husband to exhibit his Islam in practice and to educate the woman on the truth of Islam. And since it's hard for a Godly person to resist gravity towards logical truths, Muslims expect the Christian wife to ultimately embrace Islam. Live examples of such scenarios are numerous. Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam had Maria, a Copt as a wife. Also, Muawiyya, the fifth caliph, had a Christian wife.

Pinpointing a specific case, *The Christian Science Monitor* states: "From professionals to students to homemakers, they (i.e. Non-Muslims) are drawn to the Muslim faith through marriage . . . ."[163] There are more illustrations to come. Franck Ribery, the French footballer who earned the French Player of the Year title in 2007 and 2008 ". . . had become a devout Muslim, converting to the religion of Wahiba, his French wife of Moroccan origin."[164] Moreover, coach Bruno Metsu who led Senegal to a surprise victory over France in the opening match of the 2002 FIFA World Cup. ". . .had to convert to Islam to marry Rokhaya 'Daba' Ndiaye, and a fair part of the Senegalese press now calls him Abdul Karim."[165]

It is to be remembered that in 2006, a 16-year-old Michigan girl Katherine Lester hit the headlines when she flew all the way from America so as to reach Jericho where she would meet a Muslim named Abdullah Jimzawi, a 20-year-old Palestinian man whom she found through MySpace.com, a social networking web site. Jimzawi, explained to Lester that she should convert to Islam in order to marry him. Because I am told that love can provide wings to those unable to fly, I am not bewildered to learn that Katherine Lester positively responded by saying to her 'Romeo': "No problem because I love you and I love your religion."[166]

Imagine the transformation from this to this: 16-year-old Katherine Lester who escaped from her house in Michigan, flew to Middle East in an attempt to convert to Islam and marry Abdullah, a Palestinian.

163. Green, Amy. "More US Hispanics drawn to Islam." The Christian Science Monitor 28 Sept. 2006.

164. Lichfield, John. "Convert to Islam changes French mindset: Rebel Ribéry strides from sink estate to brink of greatness." Independent 6 Oct. 2006.

165. Copnall, James. "A wonderful life in the Lions' den." The Observer 9 June 2002.

166. Daraghmeh, Mohammed and Steven Gutkin. "Palestinian Anguishes Over MySpace Romance." foxnews.com 19 June 2006. <http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2006Jun19/0,4670,MySpaceMideast,00.html>
; Associated Press. "Romeo in Jericho." israelinsider 20 June 2006.
<http://web.israelinsider.com/Articles/Security/8713.htm>; Online Love: make It Work!"Seventeen Oct. 2006.

And why would the Vatican release an official church document cautioning Catholic women against marrying Muslim men?[167] If it is true that love is blind, then however much the Non-Muslim women are discouraged from marrying their beloved Muslim men, it just won't stop them.

h) Timeless Evidence for Islamic Truth

"Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believed, but what I have been given, is Divine Inspiration (i.e. Qur'an) which Allah has revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of the other Prophets on the Day of Resurrection."[168]

Christianity is practically incapable of convincing the whole world about its truth. Why? You go to America and propagate Jesus as the savior, inquisitive mind will question: How can we prove a man called Jesus ever lived on earth and how can we prove he was truly sent by God? People talk of historical Jesus! According to the Bible scholar Bart Ehrman, ". . . in parts of Scandinavia the majority of people thinks that Jesus is a completely fabricated figure, that he never actually existed but was invented by a group of people intent on starting a new religion."[169] Even if he truly existed, we cannot substantiate his miracles (walking on water, raising the dead, curing the blind, feeding the 5000 with five loaves and two fish, calming the stormy sea . . . .) "But we have the Bible, the proof left?" The Christian apologist would retreat to such a line of defense. Oh yes, in fact the Bible disqualifies the truth of Christianity because it has numerous errors, false prophecies, "discrepancies, contradictions, faulty claims, impossible statements, and harmful ideologies"[170] and other shortcomings that prove it was adulterated by man. For unsettling evidence of this claim, read any of the following books:

►MisGod'ed: A Roadmap of Guidance and Misguidance in the Abrahamic Religions by Dr. Laurence B. Brown, MD.
►Jesus, Interrupted by Bart D. Ehrman.
►Is the Bible the word of God by Ahmed Deedat
►The Bible, the Qur'an and Science: The Holy Scriptures Examined in the Light of Modern Knowledge by Dr. Maurice Bucaille.
►Misquoting Jesus by Bart D. Ehrman.
►Lost Christianities by Bart D. Ehrman.
►The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration. By Metzger, Bruce M. and Ehrman, Bart D.
►The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture by Bart D. Ehrman.

Unless people tolerate blind faith, Christianity will not get reception. In the Gospel of John the purpose of miracles is clearly stated. The Gospel states that the miracles ". . . are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you

167. Feuer, Alan. "Vatican Discourages Marriage With Muslims for Catholic Women." New York Times 15 May 2004. Also see O'Rourke, Breffni. "Vatican Cautions Against Muslim-Catholic Marriages." rferl.org 18 May 2004. <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1052841.html>

168. Bukhari Vol. 6, Bk 61, No. 504.

169. Ehrman, Bart D. Jesus, Interrupted. Kindle Edition. HarperCollins e-books, 2009.p.139.

170. Ehrman, Bart D. Jesus, Interrupted. Kindle Edition. HarperCollins e-books, 2009.p.282

may have life in his name." [John 20:31]. According to the Gospel, there was a royal official who believed in Jesus along with his whole household because Jesus healed his son [John 4:53] As Jesus himself said "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe" [John 4:49] then how did he expect the 21st century heathens to believe in him yet no one has ever seen/substantiated his miracles? As per the evidences, the Bible's credibility is questionable so how can people be convinced that Jesus actually perfomed the miracles written in the Bible? On the other hand, Islam is meant to be a universal message; it can convince anyone anywhere anytime. How? It has a timeless proof of its truth; the Holy Qur'an. It's a miracle capable of convincing those with eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to understand with. Jesus healed the sick to convince people that he is from God consequently people would believe in his message. Moses turned the staff into a snake so that Pharaoh and his people would believe in his message. If you claim to be a Messenger of God without a miracle people may not believe in you and if you have a miracle but no message, then what kind of a messenger are you? All prophets had *a miracle and a message*. Two separate features. But Prophet Muhammad's major miracle (i.e. the Qur'an) is unique in that *it is itself a miracle and a message*. Readers in need of proof for this claim should immerse themselves in any of these books:

►God'ed?: the Case for Islam as the Completion of Revelation by Dr. Laurence B. Brown, MD.
►Miracles of the Qur'an by Harun Yahya
►The Bible, the Qur'an and Science: The Holy Scriptures Examined in the Light of Modern Knowledge by Dr. Maurice Bucaille.
►The Universe Seen Through The Quran (Scientific Findings Confirmed), by Dr. Mir Aneesudin M.Sc, Ph.D
►Allah's Miracles in the Qur'an by Harun Yahya
►A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam by I.A. Ibrahim
►Qur'an and Modern Science: Compatible or Incompatible by Dr. Zakir Naik
►Self Evident Miracles of the Qur'an by Dr. Mazhar Kazi
►Is the Qur'an God's Word?:A Scientific Approach by Dr. Sami Ashouri, MD
►The Amazing Qur'an by Dr. Gary Miller.

No wonder, most of the converts profiled in this book were influenced by the timeless miracle of the Qur'an. Harry Gaylord Dorman put it best for the reader:

> It [the Qur'an] is a literal revelation of Allah, dictated to Muhammad by Gabriel, perfect in every letter. It is an ever-present miracle witnessing to itself and to Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah. Its miraculous quality resides partly in its style, so perfect and lofty that neither men nor *Jinn* could produce a single chapter to compare with its briefest chapter, and partly in its content of teachings, prophecies about the future, and amazingly accurate information such as Muhammad could never have gathered of his own accord.[171]

John Esposito, in his book, *Islam the Straight Path* highlights the same trend: "Muslim tradition is replete with stories of those who converted to Islam on hearing its (i.e. Qur'an) inimitable message and of those pagan poets who failed the Qur'anic challenge (Q10:37-38) to create verses

171. Dorman, Harry Gaylord. Towards Understanding Islam. New York: 1948. p.3

comparable with those contained in the Qur'an."[172]

i) Information, Communication and Transport Technology

"The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation."

~Karl Marx (1848)

In this technology-fueled global environment, any ideology with strong forces of attraction will in no doubt become the globally adopted ideology. Informational technology has enabled everyone to have access to world news, world religious and philosophical beliefs hence common sense will suggest that the most rational religion is likely going to win the hearts and minds of the global villagers. Islam is on the verge of becoming the world religion thanks to information technology and other means of global integration. At the time of Moses or Jesus (and even a few centuries later after their lives), there was no undersea fiber-optic cable that could link the prophet's disciples to the heathens in America, Australia and Africa. That's for sure because when Moses parted the Red Sea, the Israelites did not stumble upon any fibre optic cable on the floor of the Red Sea. Furthermore, the means of communications were so rudimentary that the heathens 3963 miles from Jerusalem would have to die without receiving the message of salvation.

In 610 CE, Muhammad was declared a global Messenger. Centuries later, the world would enter massive transformation, knitted together with technology up to the stage of becoming a global village. And a global village necessitates a global Messenger. In earlier phase of Globalization, history recorded sailing of ships by Arabs to places like East Coast of Africa. And that's how Islam reached the Coast of Kenya. Ships, railroads and other forms of global integration were responsible for globalizing Islam. Exploration, colonization, and trade are some of the forces that moved people to access foreign lands. No one doubts that Arabs were long distance traders. Prophet Muhammad was in fact a businessman and had traded goods in Syria. Appointing an Arab as a global messenger fits the mission. Islam reached the interior of my country Kenya through Arab traders. The same with Indonesia which has the largest Muslim population in the world. Even in contemporary times, with the help of tools of globalization, men in search of jobs/ business are still traversing continents. The consequence of such movements is stated by Jean-Claude Chesnais, one of France's leading demographers at the National Institute for the Study of Demographics (Ined):

> Migration trends are to intensify over the coming thirty years . . . . All developed countries will be affected, including East Asia and the former communist countries. There will be an overall mingling of cultures and civilisations that may lead, as far as France is concerned, to the emergence of a predominantly African population and to rapid Islamization.[173]

172. Esposito, John L. Islam the Straight Path. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

173. Interview with Jean-Claude Chesnais, Valeurs Actuelles, Oct. 6, 1996. Similar anxieties are voiced by Jean-Claude Barreau, a former government official in charge of immigration and the author of books on Islam and the Middle East, in La France va-t-elle disparaŒtre? (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1997). Also see Gurfinkiel, Michel. "Islam in France: The French Way of Life Is in Danger." Middle East Quarterly. March 1997.

On the other hand, Jews were not culturally known to be long-distance traders hence not fit to streamline a global message. The Multinational companies tried to put an end to geography by traversing country-borders. But when the inquisitive non-Muslim Executive of Coca-Cola in Riyadh become exposed to a different culture, in no time he returns back home wearing a full beard, now a Muslim.

Print media is still an effective means of publishing tons of pro-Islam material. Muslim writers can use the Window-enabled PC's (i.e. desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet computer or a palmtop) to write pro-Islam literature and transmit these thousands of Islam-laden resources to non-Muslims on tiny disks, CD's, or USB flash drives, thanks to digital technology. Telegraphs, fax machines, telephones, satellites are other gadgets which helped Islamic evangelism reach the edges of the earth. Communication satellites allow global television such as the Islamic channel *Peace TV* to broadcast Islam to every nook and cranny of the world. Muslims use Radio Technology to transmit Islamic signals even to the poor members of society. Jet airplane, fast trains, and cars have carried Islam to all ends of the world. With the fleet of TGV ('Train à Grande Vitesse'), French Muslim callers can roam around the cities of France to spread the word of Islam. In order to spread Islam in England, the French Muslim preachers can decide to fly over the sea, travel by ferry on the sea or below the sea by the Channel Tunnel undersea rail line link that connects France with England. Even if earth's inhabitants were to migrate to Mars or Venus, it is likely that space shuttles will launch Islam to those planets. Moreover, Countries that are part of a global supply chain will harmoniously interact with one another in order to realize their economic goals but at the same time, this collaboration and integration will create a fertile ground for Muslim zealots to also supply their Islamic culture to other nations and communities. There should be no confrontation in agreeing with William Van Wishard that ". . . globalization represents the world's best chance to enrich the lives of the greatest number of people."

William Gibson once said "when you use the internet you enter a realm in which geography no longer exist." Since Islam is a religion unrestricted with geographical boundaries, the era of the high-speed internet is the ideal era to perfectly make Islam a global religion. Through teleconferencing, knowledgeable Muslims in Nairobi can educate non-Muslims in Melbourne, Australia. Through video streaming, a Muslim scholar in Yemen can give a proselytizing lecture which is simultaneously audienced by 500 students of Religion at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. With the help of the internet, I can upload an eBook form of this book to a free file-sharing site 4shared.com or the social publishing site scrbd.com giving their 50 million monthly users a chance to be aware of Islam. Likewise, Muslim authors can digitally contribute their books as open source books to archive.org or on other websites thus zapping the message of Islam to the world. With just a computer, webcam and internet connection, a sheikh in Madina, Saudi Arabia can give online tips on how to call people to Islam. The Sheikh can use a scanner to send copies of the book recommended in proselytization which is instantly accessed by a convert to Islam in Minnesota. In this digital age, it is possible to spread a religion without having to emigrate. In these days where even grandmothers own an email, it is possible for Muslim preachers to strike up an email friendship with many people with the ultimate goal of reverting them to Islam. A zealous Muslim in Mumbai mosque (India) may use his minuscule mp3 player/digital recorder to capture Dr. Zakir Naik's lecture "Why the west is turning to Islam" and upload it to the internet for the global villagers to seamlessly access the rationales of Islam. At the same time, a practicing Muslim in Birmingham uses his digital camera to record Sheikh Khalid Yassin converting ten white men

to Islam and since this Muslim wants the world to shirk the ignorant belief that Islam is a religion of Arabs, he immediately uploads the clip to Youtube.com. Somewhere in Egypt, a Muslim blogger reaches out to millions of people halfway around the world in clearing misconceptions about Islam. Muslim preachers interested to maximize the blogosphere, even with no web savvy, can use wordpress.com to open as many free-of-charge blogs as they want and use them to propagate Islam and Islamic events. Non-Muslims may be invited to enter into online forums where they could ask questions and get immediate answers from a Muslim expert in the forum. Your Muslim friend may send you an email via your blackberry on the truth of Islam. You can order a free copy of Qur'an at allahsquran.com/free/ or Freekoran.com. The internet has made it easier for non-Muslims to freely download a translated audio Qur'an and due to people's busy schedule, they can turn their drive time to prime time by listening to the audio Quran. With websites like islamunveiled.org, users can tick the books they want in the list provided and within a short period the books are shipped to their postal address. With the emergence of companies such as Skype technologies offering free voice calls over the internet to other Skype users in any location in the world, Muslims would find themselves calling their non-Muslim acquaintances to discuss about religion. Muslims can use the easy-to-use software Your-Bumper-Sticker-Maker accessed from custombumperstickermaker.com to design and print "I am proud to be Muslim" sticker which will be put on their cars. The internet and satellite technology can enable Muslims across the globe watch their fellow Muslims humiliated in Gaza and could possible precipitate a revival of Muslim identity and solidarity hence the formation of an Islamic awakening that would conquer the world under one caliphate leaving no room for antagonists to disgrace even a single Muslim. With just a laptop and broadband wireless technology, a Muslim at Kenya's Mount Longonot can plunge into an online chat with a potential convert to Islam located in Moscow. Via websites, Muslims in India can launch a global appeal for donations to build a mosque and an Islamic school. Magnanimous Muslims in Rome, Arizona, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong would contact their bank via internet and wire their funds to India. Callers to Islam will positively use social networking sites such as Facebook; MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn to network their billion users to the message of Prophet Muhammad. Indeed, internet can connect everyone and everything and when it is used wisely, it may connect a good number of people to heaven. Any rational-bound religion that most quickly absorbs and adopts the latest technology will seamlessly dominate the world. Muslims hope that with the technology revolution, their easy-to-understand, mythology-free religion will easily be adopted in the far reaches of the world.

Were Muhammad a global messenger during Moses time or Jesus period, it might have been impractible to reach out to the world. God knew that soon after Muhammad's prophethood (632 CE), the world would soon become a global village hence the need to send him as a global messenger. The 600 years between Jesus and Muhammad, telecommunication/internet was unheard of and it would be burdensome for Jesus to reach out to an Eskimo. Jesus' Disciple could not enter into an internet chartroom to spread the religion to an American. One might argue that Jesus message can as well be globalised in this modern, technology-bristled era. We don't object but it only requires the manufacturer of the product to set the expiry date of such a product. God 'manufactured' Jesus' product (Jesus' Way of Life/Jesus' religion) and He also set the expiry date on 610 CE, when Muhammad, at the age of forty, was proclaimed a universal Messenger. A new product (Muhammad's Way of Life/Islam) was manufactured to suit the modern times and because God knew that the market will soon be closed (end of the world), the same product will have to remain till the Apocalypse.

If we insist utilizing expired product, we will suffer from problems of surplus women[174]* , juvenile delinquency, lack of genuine peace of mind, religious incompatibilities, moral collapse, world recession e.t.c. "The excellence of a gift lies in its appropriateness rather than in its value," so said Charles Dudley Warner. And in the words of William O. Douglas: "Security can only be achieved through constant change, through discarding old ideas that have outlived their usefulness and adapting others to current facts."

j) Oil

"Thanks to petroleum, Islam now has a seat and a voice in the concert of major powers" [175]

~ Murad Wilfried Hofmann.
Former German Ambassador and Director of information for NATO

Middle East, the epicenter of Islam is a region privileged by God with gas and oil. Important elements that facilitates globalization. Oil accelerates the world to be a global village. From the petrodollars, Muslim countries help promote Islam by building mosques, Islamic institutions, bankroll Islamic evangelical activities, among other things.

Oil is a universal need. All corners of the world need oil. And the top world producer of oil is the country where the Universal Messenger was born and buried; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Arab countries have the largest oil reserves. ". . .the incomparable petroleum resources of the Middle East"[176] will undoubtedly play a pivotal role for Islam. Oil has strategically been reserved in Muslim countries meaning that the world has to interact with Muslims in their bid to get a barrel of oil. It is through this interaction that 'Islamic oil' gets customers in the globe. A glimpse of the "oil-Islam factor" is manifested when the Middle East's leading English language daily Newspaper *Arab News* reported that, "As many as 4,200 expatriates of different nationalities have embraced Islam . . . ."[177] And also "The total number of those who have embraced Islam in the United Arab Emirates has reached the 10,000 mark . . . ."[178] These reverts will tirelessly try to proselytize their

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174. * World female population is consistently higher than male population. According to *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* Vol. 17, pp.34, 270,244., the female to male rations were as follows: Russia: 46.1% male to 53.9% female, UK: 48.6% male to 51.5% female; USA: 48.8% male to 51.2% female; Brazil: 49.7% male to 50.27% female. And there was a time in U.S.A. when women outnumbered men by 7.8 million (This number excludes the millions of Gays and Lesbians). So if Christianity follows its law of monogamy what will happen to the 7.8 million surplus women? Suppose your sister happens to be one of the unmarried women in USA, she will only have two options: either she marries a man who already has a wife or becomes a 'public property'. Men (and women) are sexual animals and it is beyond torture staying without a sexual partner. Being a co-wife is modest than being a mistress or prostitute. This is where Islam with its effective tool of polygamy can fix the problem of surplus women. There are some statistics showing that at least 90% of prison inmates come from dysfunctional or fatherless homes. In America, for instance some have said that such fatherless homes produce 63% of all youth suicides, 70% of all teenage pregnancies, 71% of all adolescent drug abuse, 71% of all high school drop-outs, 80% of all rapists, 80% of all prison inmates, 85% of all youths in prison, and 70% of all juveniles.

175. Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.p. 184.

176. Chomsky, Noam. Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance. London, Penguin Books Ltd., 2003. p.161.

177. Abdul Ghafour, P.K. "4,200 Embraced Islam through IEF Programs." Arab News 20 May 2006; Also see Abdul Ghafour, P.K. "New Muslims on the rise in US after Sept. 11." Arab News 3 Nov. 2002.

178. "Converts in Emirates." Islamic Voice March 1999.

families on going back to their country of origin be it Europe, America, Africa or any other part of the world.

From the oil money, Muslim countries are able to promote Islam in other corners of the globe. A case in point is the following news report:

> A recent report by a Christian organization, Frontline Fellowship, which spearheads the growth of Christianity in Africa, indicates that Islam is growing at a fast rate in this impoverished continent . . . . It says Islam is growing twice as fast as Christianity in Africa. Much of this growth Frontline Fellowship says is due to the large amounts of money from the oil-rich Arab countries that are being funnelled into African missions.[179]

According to *Times*, it is the Saudi oil wealth which is supercharging the distribution of the Qur'an in order to win the hearts of the people.

> The Koran is also going global. But for that it is unduly indebted to a single political power: Saudi Arabia. Its combination of geology and history — the country's vast oil wealth and position as the guardian of Mecca and Medina — has turned it into a vast engine for spreading the Word.[180]

■■■

To summarize, Islam is destined to be the dominant religion of the future. This is possible because: (a) It has Divine Decree to go Global; (b) from the beginning it had Ambassadors; (c) diplomats; (d) furthermore, Muslims will populate the world with its massive procreation strategy; (e) easily attract the multiracial communities since Muhammad had Non-Arab disciples and reverts; (f) can further incorporate prospective Muslims by mixed-raced marriages; (g) Inter-religious marriages; (h) Islam has the Qur'an, a timeless evidence for Islamic truth; (i) through the forces of Globalization e.g. Information, communication and transport technology; (j) and the power of oil from the Middle East.

Then why not do business with Muslims considering that the well-known American economist, Jeremy Rifkin said: "If demographics is power, then the world is tilting toward a Muslim century." Business people, investors, advertising companies and other profit-making institutions may want to tailor their ventures towards attracting the current 1.57 billion Muslim customers and the near-future Muslim majority world. Those who want to think and grow rich would plan to manufacture merchandise dear to Muslims. Think of supplying prayer rugs, halal chicken, halal pizzas (e.g. halal pepperoni), oriental delicacies, Islamic computer softwares, halal cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, Islamic books, hijabs (headscarves), oriental furniture, *Eid* cards and gifts, hijab-wearing toys for Muslim kids, establishing Islamic finance, halal e-payment, *henna* artists, Islamic-friendly daycares and schools, among other money-making ideas. Oh, and what about constructing Shariah-compliant hotels which don't serve alcohol or pork products; which have ablution and prayer areas while showing the direction to Mecca; having Qur'an in the rooms; their toilets not facing Mecca; art on the walls not of animate images; hotels with separate entrances for

179. Jomo, Frank. "Islam making in-roads in Zambia." newsfromafrica.org 19 July 2006. <http://www.newsfromafrica.org/newsfromafrica/articles/art_10733.html>

180. Micklethwait, John & Adrian Wooldridge. "The Bible v the Koran." The Times14 May 2009.

women, as well as women only function rooms and separate swimming pools. Hey, have you ever thought of Shariah-compliant airlines, restaurants, shops, hospitals, and passenger-cars?

In order to appeal to Muslims, LG had started to offer an application to help users find the direction of Makkah; Nokia has free downloadable recitations from the Qu'ran and maps showing the locations of major mosques in the Middle East; Nestlé had set up its halal committee; Malaysian and Cuban scientists are collaborating on a halal meningitis vaccine; drug companies such as the U.K.'s Principle Healthcare and Canada's Duchesnay sell halal vitamins free of the gelatins and other *haram* derivatives; and Netherlands has built halal warehouses. These are just few examples of companies that went mainstream. Those who are ignorant of the Islamic influence on the market trends don't have an idea how much they are loosing. According to *Business Daily*, Tesco, one of the leading retailers would spend around €200million on Malaysian-made halal food for its UK stores in the next five years. This is in order to attract Muslim customers (both the born Muslims and the growing converts to Islam in the western countries). It cited an important factor that is of course responsible for such ventures: "There are already 1.6 billion Muslims globally and Islam is the world's fastest growing religion, set to surpass Christianity as the biggest globally by 2023. But the most important growth may be coming from non-Muslims."[181] What if we invest in an Islamic Broadcasting Corporation which can host numerous multimedia TV channels and radio stations which would serve 1.6 billion (Muslim) viewers across the globe! Think the Islamic Way and Grow Rich.

Everyone Wants to Dominate, Who Do We consent?

"The temptation is obvious—who wouldn't want to rule the world?"[182]

-Bart D. Ehrman, Author of *Jesus, Interrupted*

"I came. I saw. I conquered"

- Julius Caesar, the Roman Emperor.

Those who are scared of Islamic domination should act smart by taking all the available systems (Islam, Christianity, capitalism, communism, e.t.c.) on the table. After comprehensively analyzing them and after evaluating their costs and benefits, they should then pick the one with most benefit and least harm to mankind. The system with elevated ideals should be allowed to transform the global order. Noam Chomsky, the world's leading "public intellectual" authored *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*, a self-explanatory title therein is enough evidence to prove how America is waging a global 'jihad' to dominate the world. In an interview with Simon Mars of Dubai's Business Channel, Noam Chomsky revealed that "the invasion of Iraq had a number of motives, and one was to illustrate the new National Security Strategy, which declares that the United States will control the world permanently by force if necessary and will eliminate any potential challenge to that domination."[183]

181. Patton, Dominique. "Why Halal label is critical for major exporters." Business Daily 26 April 2009. < http://www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2210>
182. Ehrman, Bart D. Jesus, Interrupted. Kindle Edition. HarperCollins e-books, 2009.p.83
183. Chomsky, Noam. "Of course, it was all about Iraq's resources." by Simon Mars. Dubai's Business Channel. 3 Dec. 2003.

This information is not a monopoly of Chomsky but also shared by many such as Chalmers Ashby Johnson, an American author and professor emeritus of the University of California who described the United States as ". . . a military juggernaut intent on world domination."[184] Equally, historian Sidney Lens argues that "the United States, from the time it gained its own independence, has used every available means—political, economic, and military—to dominate other nations."[185]

Should planet-dwellers allow the US to dominate? Is America maintaining its hegemony for the benefit of mankind? If the answer is in the affirmative, then to hell with those who hate peace-loving America. But in the analysis of Samuel Huntington, United States ". . . in the eyes of many countries it is becoming the rogue superpower." Huntington, the Albert J. Weatherhead III University Professor at Harvard University continues to inform us that "at a 1997 Harvard conference, scholars reported that the elites of countries comprising at least two-thirds of the world's people -- Chinese, Russians, Indians, Arabs, Muslims, and Africans -- see the United States as the single greatest external threat to their societies."[186] In the eyes of Anatol Lieven, a Senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, America "has become a menace to itself and to mankind."[187] Furthermore, some University professors, wealthy Arab businessmen, government officials and political analysts share the opinion of the Egypt best-known intellectual that "to most people in this area (i.e. Egypt) the United States of America is the source of evil on planet earth."[188] So if "what worries people around the world above all else is living in a world shaped and dominated by one country-the United States"[189] then is there another system/power than mankind may comfortably allow to shape and dominate the world, a system like Islam for example? It is a demonstrative of mental illness and intellectual dishonesty to refuse giving candidacy to Islam without having researched on Islam, its policies and impacts to the world.

Man has to dominate even God authorizes man to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." [Genesis 1:28] But when man is supposed to dominate, God should have laid a system on which, if man implements it, the world would be good and safer for everyone. Muslims believe that Islam is a system formulated not by human beings but by the All-knower of events, the Almighty God whereas other un-Islamic paradigms are man-made hence inherently faulty. Have you ever thought of these subsequent things that significantly pale in comparison: American congress passing a law and One God passing a law! Professors of foreign policy proffering the best policies verses One God formulating policies! After three years of work, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopting and proclaiming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights versus One God setting forth the rights and freedoms for mankind in just a millisecond! Human majority voting for a finest rule and One God endorsing His law! What will be the best law? This is how Muslims feel about their Sharia. Perfect system emanating

184. Johnson, Chalmers. The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004. p. 4.

185. Lens, Sidney. The Forging of the American Empire. Haymarket Books and Pluto Press, 2003. Back Cover.

186. Huntington, Samuel P. "The Lonely Superpower." Foreign Affairs March-April 1999. Vol. 78. Issue 2.

187. Chomsky, Noam. "Drain The Swamp…No More Mosquitoes." Toronto Star 20 Oct. 2002

188. Sachs, Susan. "Egyptian Intellectual Speaks Of the Arab World's Despair." New York Times 8 April 2003.

189. Zakaria, Fareed. "The Arrogant Empire." Newsweek U.S. Edition. 24 March 2003.

from a Perfect God. Because the Islamic system comes from God, Muslims have the conviction that it is an error-free system of which if well implemented it would bring benefits to all. If God does not err, His judgments being fair and His policies the best policies then Muslims wonder why on earth are people hesitating to invite God's system (i.e. Islam) to dominate the world! Even America claims to be a historical vanguard and hence obliged to "maintain its global dominance and military supremacy forever and without challenge, for the benefit of all."[190] If Noam Chomsky and other intellectuals have already substantiated that the US policies are not God-given policies, their expected course of action is to turn to Islam, study it and find out whether it is true that Islam is a God-made system. Mankind would want to see any system capable of reinstating peace, justice, prosperity, international harmony and better life dominate the world. In that case, there is nothing wrong if America shapes and dominates the world, but first we need to be assured that the policies/institutions are error-free (i.e. God-made). There is also nothing wrong with Christianity realizing the dream of dominance as long as its system is inspired by God. And correspondingly, everything is right if Islamic culture permeates the globe provided that its system is revealed by God. The burden of research lies with us. America claims that their altruistic concern of "what is good for us (e.g. democracy, rule of law, freedom e.t.c.) is good for the world" is forcing them to dominate the world. Then what is wrong if Muslims want to unselfishly impose Islam (its Sharia) to mankind because Islam has been good for them hence it would also be good for the world. Before one of the Islamic conquests, a self-confident companion of Prophet Muhammad named Rib'ee bin Aamir walked to the court of the lavishly dressed General Rustam (a non-Muslim) to deliver what may be called Islam Mission Statement. Rib'ee bin Aamir said: "Allah has sent us to liberate whoever He wishes from being slaves of men to the slavery of Allah, from the narrowness of this world to the vastness of this world and the Hereafter, and from the tyranny and oppression of (false) religions to the justice of Islam."[191] From Rib'ee's statement, the claims are that Islam should dominate because it has a noble cause and that it is the best system of governance. Francis Fukuyama and Michael McFaul writes: ". . . democracy is the best system of government." They go further to point out that "Winston Churchill was right: democracy is a terrible system of government, but still better than all of the others that have been tried."[192] But have they tried all systems or to be specific have they ever *tried* Islam? If not, then Muslims have a right to claim that Islam is the best system of government. Thomas Friedman writes "communism was a great system for making people equally poor . . . capitalism made people unequally rich"[193] but what if Islam is that great system that will neither make people equally poor nor make them unequally rich? Still Muslims complain that Islam as an alternative system of governance that has not been given serious scholarship.

In less than a decade, Alexander the great and his men conquered most of the known world. Then, there was the Roman Empire with its sophisticated military strength, at its time, annexed

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190. Chomsky, Noam. Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance. London, Penguin Books Ltd., 2003. pp.42-43,p.227.

191. Kandhlawi, Maulana Muhammad Yousuf. [Translated by Dr. Majid Ali Khan]. The Lives of the Sahabah. Karachi, Darul-Ishaat, 1995. Vol.3. p. 678; Also Alshareef, Muhammad. Lecture. Conquest: History of the Khulafa. University of Toronto, Toronto. November 2005.

192. Fukuyama, Francis and Michael McFaul. "Should Democracy Be Promoted or Demoted?" Bridging the Foreign Policy Divide The Stanley Foundation June 2007.p.4.

193. Friedman Thomas L. The World is Flat. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2006. p.52

territories and became a hegemonic power. The Empire covered over two million square miles stretching from the Rhine River to Egypt and from Britain to Asia Minor. Rome conquered and ruled the entire Mediterranean world and just like any other imperialistic power, the Romans brought their political institutions, their laws, their culture, their roads, their currency, and their language to the people they governed. No wonder the imperialistic phrase "I came. I saw. I conquered" is attributed to Julius Caesar, the Roman Emperor. Charlemagne's Empire and Persian Empire are other imperialistic forces. Even on a familial level, a man's self esteem is boasted if he is the head of the family. However, women launch clandestine treason-like combat to dominate claiming that the man is no more than a symbolical head of the family but women are the neck and they can turn the head whichever direction they wish. Even from the lyrics of Lauryn Hill and Nas "If I Ruled The World" you can feel the burning desire of man's love for power. Further illustration of man's inherent desire to conquer goes back to a hundred years ago, when Britain was a superpower, ruling a quarter of the globe's population. Russia had also launched a crusade to dominate the world. America has been the leading world power for almost a century now. Many have no doubts that America has imperial ambitions. "I have read carefully the treaty of Paris" says the American author and lecturer Mark Twain, "and I have seen that we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem."[194] Other countries aspire to be world powers as well. China's shadow is also lengthening. Even Muslims want to dominate. The Islamic ambition to stage a world domination has been stated in the Qur'an 14 centuries ago and it can be cited from Qur'an Chapter 61 verse 9: "He (i.e. Allah) it is Who has sent His Messenger (i.e. Muhammad) with guidance and the religion (i.e. system) of truth (i.e. Islam) to make it victorious over all (other) religions even though those who associate others with Allah dislike it." Unlike the "I came. I saw. I conquered" attitude of the Roman Emperor, Muslims seem to live with "I-came-to-conquer" creed. It appears that the world cannot exist without a hegemonic power. If that is the case, which one do we consent? Do we consent a Roman-type-of-empire which was responsible for sentencing the innocent Jesus to crucifixion or do we promote a just empire that would bring peace to the world?

Why would all countries have armies if peace is a non-confrontational undertaking? Without military confrontation, Hitler would not have been halted. America's militarization of space in its quest for a "full spectrum dominance" is a good illustration of how power is badly needed. Political scientist Lawrence Kaplin concluded that American "missile defense isn't really meant to protect America. It's a tool for global dominance."[195] No one objects that power is needed to secure the social welfare of the people and as Blaise Pascal said "Justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical", it is therefore understandable and laudable for the system/ideology loaded with elevated ideals to use power to erect its noble ideals for the good of mankind. Unless you didn't understand when Thomas Hobbes described man as cruel, greedy, and selfish, and if not caged, they would fight, rob, and trouble each other. Unless you didn't even agree with Immanuel Kant, the German writer and philosopher that "man must be disciplined, for he is by nature raw and wild." Unless you don't even believe that Satan is also breathing with us. But if we agree that power is important to curb the deviant traits of mankind, we will consent to any religion/ideology/country/caliphate/organization that can properly exercise its power to make the world a better place. Good people should use power to stop bad people and this concept resonates well with

194. Twain, Mark. "Letter to the editor." New York Herald 15 Oct. 1900.

195. Kaplin, Lawrence. The New Republic 12 March 2001.

Edmund Burke, an 18thcentury Irish political philosopher who said, "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." And there is President Obama who, in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, said that people should "make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world" and thus "there will be times when nations — acting individually or in concert — will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified." The yes-we-can-bring-change president further acknowledged that the non-violent creeds of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King are not enough to bring about change. ". . . as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation," the President said, "I cannot be guided by their examples alone [i.e. examples of Gandhi and King]." And whenever a Muslim recalls the words of the Nobel laureate Obama: "So yes, the instruments of war do have a role to play in preserving the peace"[196] this Muslim will say "you see, I told you, Islam is a religion of peace and it must wage jihad to achieve and preserve peace." Thus when Muslims see Jihad as an important form of worship they should not be perceived as makers of war, but in the broader picture, they are wagers of peace. When the former United States Senator Elizabeth Dole agreed to the necessity of power by declaring: "We have learned that power is a positive force," she didn't stop there but continued by conditioning that, "if it is used for positive purposes." In the same vein, every force/system/ideology/paradigm must have a way of disciplining the malevolent problem-causers and smashing all opposition of the noble system. This applies to other systems including Islam and Christianity. However, Muslims still argue that even their way of bringing order is formulated by God hence it is just, divine and superior to any other way of realizing hegemony. For such reasons they see Islam as the right way of life that should transform the world order. Otherwise, Muslims have no right to dominate the world and should not even be allowed to dominate. But the extremely ignorant will outrightly dismiss Islam without even researching on it and comparing it with the available systems.

The US hegemonic ambitions which disregard survival, as evidenced by Noam Chomsky in *Hegemony or Survival* and in his other works, is realized by any means necessary even if it means attacking other people's deserts; imposing sanctions that target the countrymen; violation of human rights; violation of international laws; perfecting the art of propaganda; killing of millions of innocent people, men, women and infants; stimulating devastating humanitarian catastrophes; inciting countries to wars, eliciting fear in the hearts of earth-dwellers including their own citizens in its propaganda war; undertaking actions that would lead to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terror; endowing benefits to elite interests while barring descent survival to the rest; deepening economic stagnation; causing social and economic collapse; resorting to state-terrorism; backing state terror; engaging in international terrorism; calculated brutality and arbitrary murder; propping up rogue and brutal states; inciting the victims of American oppression to turn to the "weapons of the weak" (i.e. terrorism); installing tyrannical leaders in other countries who would serve American interests at the expense of their countries; unlawful use of force; waging war just because of oil; willful killing, torture and unlawful deportation; enhancing terror; taking defenseless and weak countries as guinea pigs for her war machine and flaunting her military might to potential challenge to its domination; supports the oppression of Muslims; engaging in policies that incite other countries to get nuclear weapons; their missile defense created not for defense but offence; violation of the will of the overwhelming majority of Americans; ignoring world opinion; widening the gap between `haves' and `have-nots'; undermining Kyoto Protocol

196. Obama, Barack H. "Nobel Lecture." nobelprize.org Retrieved 11 Dec. 2009. <http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/obama-lecture.html>;Also see Sanger, David E. "Obama Outlines a Vision of Might and Right." New York Times 11 Dec. 2009.

in order not to harm her economy thus trivializing the issue of global warming and greenhouse gas emissions; making the more insecure; engaging in activities that threaten to put an end to the human race and jeopardizing the future of our species.* With these shocking strategies of American superpowerdom, it comes as no surprise that in his book Hegemony or Survival, Noam Chomsky is paraphrasing Lara Marlowe: ". . . if this is to be the model for the hegemonic superpower, heaven help us all."[197] Likewise, other scholars and researchers agree that America has a history of using brutal means to achieve global domination while willfully disregarding the home-and-abroad ramifications of their imperial aspirations. Acts like murdering innocent lives in America's false-flag operations; subverting commerce and globalization; using CIA to overthrow democratically elected president; using American hegemony as a magnet for global brain drain, thereby undercutting development and potential of other countries; promoting its own interests with little reference to those of others; fond of applying double standards; buttressing moral collapse among other evil outcome of American-style hegemony. This is outright wrong and peace-loving people would want to know whether there is an alternative to American hegemony.

On the other hand, according to their scripture, Muslims are supposed to dominate the world with the help of two broad ways: (1) proselytization or persuasion (i.e. preaching of Islam or Da'awah in Islamic terminology and (2) by force or conquest. The first one is undertaken by scholars. They are expected to utilize their stock of knowledge and wisdom to win the hearts and minds of potential converts after presenting evidences of Islamic truth. This can be through calling people to Islam by the word of mouth, print-media, audio-visuals, internet e.t.c. It can be argued that in these contemporary times, Islam is dominating through this non-violent means (i.e. proselytization). All of the reverts to Islam profiled in this book were presented not with a sharp sword but overwhelming evidences of Islamic truth. The other way is by staging conquests but unlike the American hegemonic crusades, Muslims are scripturally banned from actions like coercing others to Islam; killing women, old men, non-combatants, destroying crops, trees, livestock, those who surrender e.t.c. After the death of Muhammad, the first Commander-in-chief of the Islamic Empire was Abu Bakr. In a military expedition, he gave the following instructions to the commander who led the campaign to Syria:

> Do not betray, be treacherous or vindictive. Do not mutilate. Do not kill children, the aged or women. Do not cut or burn palm trees or fruit trees. Do not slay a sheep, a cow, or camel except for your food. And you will come across people who stay in hermitages for worship; leave them alone to what they devote themselves to.

Did Bush give similar instruction when his armies were conquering Afghanistan and Iraq? The war crimes committed by Bush are no different from those committed by crusaders who entered Jerusalem on July 15, 1099. In the words of the famous historian Edward Gibbon, the conquerors ". . .broke children's skulls by knocking them against the wall, threw babies from roof tops, roasted men over fires and cut open women's bellies to see if they had swallowed any gold." Muslim scholars

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* Please read Noam Chomsky's book *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* for elaborative revelations of America's ill-ways of attaining global hegemony.

197. Chomsky, Noam. Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance. London, Penguin Books Ltd., 2003. pp.42-43,p.141.

assert that it is only those who resist elevated ideals (i.e. Islam) who should be fought. Otherwise if countries welcome Islamic rule, they will be protected. The prophet's constitution in the Islamic State of Madina had this clause: ". . . any Jew who lives under us is entitled to protection and equality . . . The Jews' religion is their own, and the Muslims' religion is their own. . . ."[198] The same trend became visible during the reign of second caliph after death of Muhammad. He once gave the following order to his deputies: "My commandment is that non-Muslims in the state should be treated kindly, and that pacts entered in with them should be kept. Any enemy who approaches on their side must be fought back. They may not be given a task that is beyond their endurance. . . ." According to The Standing Committee for Scholarly Research and Issuing Fatwas, one of the respected Scholarly committees which is based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

> Islam spread by means of proof and evidence to those who listened to the message and responded to it, and it spread by means of force and the sword to those who were stubborn and arrogant, until they were overwhelmed and became no longer stubborn, and submitted to that reality.[199]

If someone asks you to make one choice: accept Jesus as your savior (i.e. be Christian) or die by the sword and suppose that on the Day of Judgment, all those who accepted Jesus won the Kingdom of Heaven while the rest were condemned to unquenchable hellfire for 300 trillion years, would you still condemn the person who forced you to accept the Savior? Or consider the following hypothetical discovery. The year is 2075. NASA has just discovered a new planet unlike any other known in the universe and which is much much much bigger than Jupiter. Spaciousness of this planet is mind boggling. Experts are uncertain of the exact size of the Planet, but the exploratory unit were able to understand the size of the Planet after a series of investigations and analysis and they confirmed that the "width is like the width of the heavens and earth." The surface of the Planet is made up crystallized perfume, its stones are pearls and emeralds. While reporting to the surprised audience, the spokesman of NASA said at a press briefing, "And if you ask about its rocks, then they are pearls and jewels." On the surface of the Planet, trillion of lofty mansions made of bricks of gold and silver were easily highlighted. It has now been verified that in this Planet, there are "…lofty mansions, one above another, have been built: beneath them flow rivers (of delight)…" The scientists observed that apart from the diamond-encrusted gadgets they pictured, it is now established that most items such as furniture's, utensils, and combs are made of gold and silver. So far, four rivers have been cited flowing on the Planet, rivers of water the taste and smell of which are not changed; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes, the milk is of utmost whiteness, sweetness, and richness; rivers of delicious wine; and rivers of clarified honey (clear and pure). Further evidence reveals that the wine is "crystal-white, delicious to the drinkers, (it) has no bad effects, nor does it cause intoxication" and it neither causes headache nor hangover. However, on their venture to know the source of these rivers, they discovered that on this Planet there is "a lake of milk, a lake of water, a lake of honey, and a lake of wine. The rivers then gush out of them." One great astronaut took the courage and landed on the Planet, he reports: "I . . . found myself by a river, by its edges were tents of pearls. Then I tapped with my hands where the water was running, and there was then a beautiful smell of Musk (i.e. perfume)." What gave more hope for existence of life on this Planet is the fact that they spotted vegetation.

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198. Sirah of Ibn Hisham. Vol. II, pp. 148-149; Tafseer of Ibn Katheer Vol. 1ll, (pp. 246 - 247).

199. Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah 12/14. The Fatwa can be accessed from the official website of the General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta: <http://www.alifta.net/Default.aspx>

The explorers were amazed by a tree they found on this Planet. ". . . there is a tree that a rider can travel for a hundred years under its shade but would not be able to pass it" and astonishingly, one of the scientists remarked that there is not a tree in this Planet, "except that its trunk is made of gold." There are also trees that are laden with fruits. Fruits which they knew before (i.e. exists on planet earth), and that which they did not know before. Although there are plenty of fruits of various kinds, some fruits the probe unit could recognize include bananas, pomegranate, fresh ripe dates, grapes and olives. Moreover the evidence point out that there are ". . . thornless lote-trees, and [banana] trees layered [with fruit], and shade extended, and water flowing constantly, and fruit in abundance whose season is not limited and their supply will not be cut off." One of the greatest discoveries about the Planet is that they found so many, many, many young, full-breasted, beautiful, sexy women to an extent that if all the men on earth were to visit the Planet every man will be able to posses not less than 70 of these ". . . fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes, the likenesses of pearls well-protected" It is believed that these ladies must be craving for men to land on the Planet for neither man nor Jinn has had sexual intercourse with them. Research suggests that in the minimum level "every person would have two wives" and there would be none without a wife on the Planet. Likewise, everywoman will have a husband. They are no single ladies is such a Planet. The NASA scientists speculate that there are numerous fashionable clothes. However, from what they have seen from the pictures taken, and if the government takes people there, then ". . . their garments will be of fine green silk, and gold embroidery. They will be adorned with bracelets of silver. . ." Pearls of laughter were heard from some of people the during a Question and Answer session. "Tell us about the clothes of the people (i.e. of this Planet) . . . are they created or are they woven?" a man asked. Of course some couldn't suppress their laughters however; the scientist rebuked the people for laughing to such an intelligent question. "No," the Scientist responded, "they are produced by the fruits [that grow on this Planet]. . . ." In fact the tree that produces the clothing of the people has botanically been named *Tooba* and the discoverer said that it is ". . . as big as a hundred year's journey; the clothes of the people (of dwellers of the Planet) . . . comes from its calyces [the outer parts of its flowers]" The team of scientists also found a state-of-the-art market place in which the presence of human beings triggers the north wind to blow and scatter fragrance on the faces and clothes of all people present thus adding them beauty and loveliness. "Are there horses (i.e. on this Planet)?" One interested man asked. The expert with more knowledge about the Planet told the man that if he is lucky to land there then "any time you wish to be carried on a horse of red rubies that will fly with you wherever you want. . . ." Immediately another man of an Arab descent asked, "Will there be camels?" Although the response was different from the first inquirer, the expert answered, ". . . you will have there (for free) whatever your heart desires." It is speculated that on this Planet there are free-for-all choppers, luxury yachts, submarines, cruise ships, suvs, classy cars such as Koenigsegg CCXR, motorbikes, luxurious trains, and all the 'we-ve-never-thought-about' transport services. NASA experts haven't measured the exact temperatures of the Planet but evidence show that there is neither excessive heat, nor the excessive bitter cold. They were amazed that viruses, bacteria's and other disease-causing organism don't survive in such temperatures. Some of the scientists think that maybe there is a unique type of oxygen which when inhaled people neither age nor die. The Planetary environment deserves more scholarship because the scientists found that an aging earthly man would miraculously find himself transformed into a 33 year-old person. Furthermore no sense of fatigue touches anyone who lands there and they observed that negative earthly traits such as jealousy, envy, hatred, enmity, hypocrisy, rancor e.t.c. are completely inactive in these regions. The team of scientists said that it is very possible that people who may get the chance of going there will be

provided with ". . . the flesh of fowls that they desire" and they will also be served ". . . with fruit and meat, such as they desire." But with all the abundance of food, drinks, women, how will man maximize the pleasures found in this Planet? The good news the discoverers revealed is that one man ". . . will be given the strength of a hundred men for eating, drinking, desire and sexual intercourse." The physiological process of man in that Planet seems to have changed drastically because while on the Planet, people ". . . would neither void excrement, nor pass water, nor suffer from catarrh, nor would they spit." In such a post-modern physiological setting, the excretion is through sweat but the sweat will be musk (perfume). Although the Planet has puzzled the scientists, they don't think gravity is responsible for this entire phenomenon. The scientists are pressing Congress for more funding to unveil more details about the Planet. With their rudimentary technology and scarcity of research funding, this is what they discovered. But they firmly believe that there are more things which "no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard of, and nobody has ever thought of." The Planet has been officially given different names but the most distinguishing name is Al-Jannah. However, the International Astronomical Union has ratified more other names designated for the Planet which include Dār al-salām (i.e. Home of Peace) , Dār al-hayawān (The Home in the Hereafter), Jannat al-'adn (Gardens of Everlasting Bliss) , Jannat al-khuld (The Eternal Gardens) ,Jannat al-ma'wá (Garden of Abode) , Jannat al-na'īm (The Gardens of Delight) , and al-Maqām al-amīn (The House of Security). Although the discovery has been published widely in many reliable texts, most people are ignorant of the existence of such a wondrous Planet . . . . NOW . . . . Janna Motors has just launched a free spaceship that would relocate man from earth to the discovered Planet. After realizing the marvel of the new Planet, smart people willingly and hurriedly boarded the spaceship. And because planet earth has always been full of wonders and mysteries, there happen to be some other people who arrogantly and stubbornly refuse to board the spaceship. If we put chains on this non-willing people and drag them to the spaceship leading to the new Planet, are we going to be labeled the worst of people? Intolerant barbarians? Prophet Muhammad sometimes referred to as the Prophet of Mercy once said: "The best [most beneficial] people for people are those who drag [non-willing] people with chains in their necks to embrace Islam [thus bringing them salvation]."[200]

When Muslims conquer an infidel's land, three options are given. A) Either they convert to Islam; (b) or adhere to their religion but they have to pay tax to the Islamic Government; (c) but if they refuse then they are mercilessly fought. However, the only way to be exempted from tax is to embrace Islam. Saudi citizens are exempt from income tax whereas employees in my country must pay tax to the government and some countries have higher tax to pay. To live under a tax-free country is preferable than to be burdened by tax and therefore the imposition of tax on non-Muslims is a means to encourage them to convert to Islam. Muslims know that everyone on the face of the earth is a slave of Allah hence man has to humble himself before God and serve Him the way the Master (i.e. God) wants. As a slave of God, the rules and duties you are supposed to observe are laid down in Qur'an (i.e. Islam). So if the infidels refuse to be slaves of God (i.e. refuse

200. Al-Nawawi, Yahya ibn Sharaf [Translated by Muhammad Badawi]. Gardens of the Virtuous, In the Speech of Prophet Muhammad. Beirut: Sharif Al Ansari Son's Company, 2007. p. 514; Also see Bukhari, Vol.6, No.80. In another Hadith, Prophet Muhammad said: God is pleased with a group of people who enter Paradise in chains (they are captured and chained, and then they embrace Islam). See Al-Nawawi, Yahya ibn Sharaf [Translated by Muhammad Badawi]. Gardens of the Virtuous, In the Speech of Prophet Muhammad. Beirut: Sharif Al Ansari Son's Company, 2007. p. 514; also see this Hadith in Bukhari Vol.4, No. 254. In explaining this Hadith scholars say that "the people referred to here may be the prisoners of war who were captured and chained by the Muslims and their imprisonment was the cause of their conversion to Islâm. So, it is as if their chains were the means of winning Paradise."

to be Muslims), then the imposition of tax is a kind of humiliation for them. They now have to be slaves of the slaves of Allah (i.e. slaves of Muslims). Islam means total surrendering of oneself to the will of God and a Muslim is not a Muslim unless he submits to God. What the infidels are doing is refusing to surrender to the will of God hence God is humiliating them by making them surrender to His slaves (the Muslims) hence they have to pay tax. In short the message is "be a slave of God or be a slave of the slave of God." From the annals of history we know that Muslims forcefully conquered infidel lands such as Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Afghanistan and many others. But what amazes me is that you will never hear a Muslim in Iraq/Egypt for instance regret the actions of the early Muslims in forcing their grand-grandparents to convert to Islam. Instead these Muslims are happy that their grand-parents were forced by the sword to become Muslims. And if Islam was a terrible way of life, I am wondering why Iraqis are still Muslims in this age of freedom and democracy!

The choice of living under Islamic state by paying tax applies to the people of the Book (i.e. Christians and the Jews) and the Zoroastrians.*[201] Other religions, their option is either to convert or death. Or is there a better analogy. Oh yes, the cure for Ebola has just been discovered. A doctor points a shotgun at an ebola patient, telling him, "you better swallow these anti-Ebola drugs or I blow your brains out." The Doctor knows that "the part that is incurably wounded must be cut off, lest the parts that are sound be corrupted" meaning that if man is given the freedom to live the satanic way of life, then their satanic ideologies would spread to the entire planet making human survival impossible. "And if it were not for Allah *checking* [some] people by means of others" Qur'an chapter 2 verses 251 says, "the earth would have been corrupted . . . ." [Q2:251] Those who downplay the necessity of killing the incurable, immutably ignore-centric infidels should watch the movie I Am Legend starring Will Smith.* In the same vein, if it is true that Islam will bring peace to the world, anyone who refuses it should have his head separated from the body. I argue that Jesus would love to see his enemies killed in a brutal manner. In Mark 9:42, we are informed that if you attempt to put a stumbling block before the followers of Jesus, then Jesus says, ". . . it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea." The 'convert-or-sword' attitude is manifested in John the Baptist when he stated that ". . . every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." [Luke 3:9] The chief purpose of Mango tree is to produce fruits and man is designed to worship God but if he refuses

* Even though Tax [Jizya] is obligatory upon the non-Muslims, there are some categories of these non-Muslims that are exempted from paying the tax. They include kids, women, decrepit [i.e. very aged people], chronically ill, the blind, slaves, the poor, and those incapable of paying the tax. Implicit here is the notion that Islam is a religion of Mercy and not a religion of maltreatment and punishment.

* The movie is about a plague that killed 5.4 billion people (90% of humanity) and transforms the rest into monsters. And Robert Neville (Will Smith), a former scientist struggles hard to find a cure. Robert Neville, illuminating on the danger of both The Krippen Virus and the virus infected mutants, rants: "Six billion people on Earth when the infection hit. KV [i.e. Krippen Virus] had a ninety-percent kill rate, that's five point four billion people dead. Crashed and bled out. Dead. Less than one-percent immunity. That left twelve million healthy people, like you, me, and Ethan. The other five hundred and eighty-eight million turned into your dark seekers, and then they got hungry and they killed and fed on everybody. Everybody! Every *single* person that you or I has ever known is dead! Dead!" Now, what option will you have for the infected hosts referred to as the darkseekers who have mutated into carnivorous beings? There is only one option. They need to be killed lest they infect others. However, towards the end of the movie a cure was discovered. But since the cure became available what options would you have for the virus infected mutants who refuse to be injected with the cure. The option is still one. They must be killed. The movie is an excellent analogy to the Islamic concept of "either-convert-to-Islam-or-the-sword." Muslims believe that Islam is the injection responsible for restoring a healthy and moral way of life. Disbelievers are infected with Satan and as a consequence, they exhibit an evil and immoral way of life. If they refuse the cure, the world would be corrupted by their evil way of life. To save the world from the plague, they must either embrace Islam or get annihilated.

201. Al Maqdisi, Ibn Qudaamah. Umdat Fiq-hi. The Book of Jihad, The chapter of Al-Jizya.

to bear fruit (i.e. do what God commands) then he must be "cut down and thrown into the fire." Muslims believe that when Jesus returns, he will join the Mujahideen in fighting the non-Muslims until they either convert to Islam or face death. In one narration, Prophet Muhammad said, "He (i.e. Jesus) will descent (to the earth). When you see him, recognize him: a man of medium height, reddish fair, wearing two light yellow garments, looking as if drops were falling down from his head though it will not be wet. He will fight the people for the cause of Islam."[202] Muhammad Swaleh Munajjid, one of the prominent and well-respected Muslim scholars talking about the role of the sword in spreading the truth stated:

> The fact that the sword and power were means of spreading Islam is not a source of shame for Islam, rather it is one of its strengths and virtues, because that makes people adhere to that which will benefit them in this world and in the Hereafter. Many people are foolish and lacking in wisdom and knowledge, and if they are left to their own devices they will remain blinded to the truth, indulging in their whims and desires. So Allah has prescribed jihad in order to bring them back to the truth and to that which will benefit them. Undoubtedly wisdom dictates that the fool should be prevented from doing that which will harm him, and should be forced to do that which will benefit him.[203]

In fact, America is also using these two ways (i.e. by persuasion and by force/ conquests) to impose their way of life to the world. But because winning the hearts and minds of the world through proselytization has less impact, America has heavily relied upon conquest. According to America's most honored dissident intellectuals, Professor Noam Chomsky the United States has attempted to "maintain its hegemony through the threat or use of military force."[204] Remember Bush scaring the 'dar-ul harb (i.e. the domain of war)' by demanding them to either be with the American model of life or face the consequences of being terrorists. Even the ex-director of Human Rights Watch Africa, now a Professor of Law at Emory University knows that America is waging jihad to establish its empire as he says regarding Bush's war on terror, "I am unable to appreciate any moral, political or legal difference between this *jihad* by the United States against those it deems to be its enemies and the jihad by Islamic groups against those they deem to be their enemies."[205] Another assertion of Americas use of the 'sword' to dominate is when some concerned American church leaders, while questioning the morality of Americas war in Afghanistan, wrote An Open Letter to the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States of America airing challenging questions such as:

> Does the United States really go forward with a right intention in this battle? Given the public rhetoric since September 11th, isn't it more probable that a major influence on the decision for war was the desire to make the US appear strong before the world, thus reinforcing our global dominance? Is it therefore morally justifiable to kill innocent civilians abroad so that the United

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202. Abu Dawud Bk. 32, No. 4310.

203. Munajjid, Muhammad Swaleh. "Was Islam spread by the sword?" islamqa.com. Fatwa Number 43087. <http://islamqa.com/en/ref/43087/sword>

204. Chomsky, Noam. Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance. London, Penguin Books Ltd., 2003.

205. Booth, Ken and Tim Dunne (ed.), "Upholding International Legality Against Islamic and American Jihad," Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

States can spread "fear and respect" for our military power?[206]

No one needs to point a gun at you to agree with Immanuel Wallerstein, the editor of Review and Senior Research Scholar at Yale University that ". . . imperialism is an integral part of the capitalist world-economy" and that in this American-led world, mankind is experiencing an ". . . aggressive and egregious form of imperialism."[207] Unlike the American hegemony, the Islamic hegemony is not bent on threatening human survival but instead it warrants survival and better life for all. Truth be told, most countries are contemporarily dominated/controlled not by Islam but by America! After all, Thucydides once remarked that "large nations do what they wish, while small nations accept what they must." Those who object being dominated by Islam contend that America has more elevated ideals than Islam. But since many people are extremely ignorant of Islam, there is a likelihood that they judged wrongly.

What if today America is headed by a man who ". . . came into the world, to testify to the truth" [John 18:37], and whose slogan "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" [John 14:6] won him the presidential election. A man who ". . . will proclaim justice to the Gentiles . . . (and who) will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope." [Mathew 12:18-21] Someone who would ". . . bring good news to the poor . . . (and) proclaim release to the captives. . . ."[Luke 4:18] and even shut down the Guantanamo Bay prison in one day like the way his pragmatic approach was known at the temple where, with the help of a whip (if he was in America, a gun would do), he angrily drove the moneychangers, businessmen out of the temple and he violently turned the tables, and poured out the coins of the moneychangers [John 2:13-16]. . . A man who is not after power, hubris, greed and who cannot be swayed by transitory enjoyment of this world for his final ". . . kingdom is not from this world." [John18:36], a meekness-filled man who can go to the extent of saying, "Let the little children come to me" [Mathew 19:14]. What if the oval office is occupied by a person who has consistently said: ". . . I am gentle and humble in heart . . . ." [Mathew 11:29], someone who from his words "I do not seek my own glory" [John 8:50] we can tell that he is not obsessed with fame. A man who would adopt a foreign policy of "turning the other cheek" to avoid causing much destruction but instead choosing to tread on the path of peace because to such a beacon of peace, "Blessed are the peacemakers. . . ." [Matthew 5:9] and he appears to believe that "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." [Mathew 5:7] A president whose motto shall be "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you. . . ." [Mathew 7:12] a president who shall love the citizen of the neighboring country as himself. What if Jesus were the president of the United States of America? Jesus being the Commander-in-chief of the United States armed forces, do you think he can be passive when little children in Gaza are heartlessly bombed? During his three-year-life period on the face of the earth, Jesus couldn't implement God's purposes on earth in a forceful way because he was a defenseless minority. Even Muhammad lived for 13 years under the Makkan pagans as a minority and did not use power to implement God's purposes on earth in any forceful way but the remaining 10 years when he migrated to Madina, he became stronger and power was appropriately used to expand God's theocratic government on earth. Do you think Jesus

206. "An Open Letter to the Roman Catholic Bishops of The United States of America regarding the morality of our nation's war on the people of Afghanistan." kingdomnow.org 28 Dec. 2001. <http://www.kingdomnow.org/openltr.html>

207. Wallerstein, Immanuel. "U.S. Weakness and the Struggle for Hegemony." Monthly Review July-Aug. 2003. Vol. 55, No. 3.

would not use the Sharia of Torah so that Allah's will may be done on earth? If Jesus became the president of America, do you think Jesus would sign a legislation to legalize gay marriage? If you would vote for Jesus, then you won't have emotional strain if Prophet Muhammad becomes the president of a hegemonic power. Muslims believe that Jesus and Muhammad are both Messengers of God and have a commonality of purpose. If Jesus' way of life/set of rules were imposed on the international system, the world would be safe and peaceful. Similarly ". . . if a man like him (i.e. Muhammad) were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world," says Sir George Bernard Shaw, "he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness." Bernard Shaw further adds, "I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."[208] This is the candidate who wants to rule the world, read about him as told by Washington Irving (1783-1859) well-known as the first American man of letters:

> He was sober and abstemious in his diet, and a rigorous observer of fasts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind; neither was his simplicity in dress affected, but the result of a real disregard to distinction from so trivial a source . . . In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints . . . His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vain glory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect were shown to him.[209]

If Islam Is A Threat To Our Way Of Life, Should We Fight It?

"We constitute a threat in that our model (Islam) is spreading as if by radiation" [210]

~ Hassan al-Turabi

Those who are clueless of the fact that Islam is the most-fought-against religion should do their homework especially after Sam Harris, the author of *The End of Faith* and *Letter to a Christian Nation* declarred, "It is time we admitted that we are not at war with terrorism. We are at war with Islam."[211] Anyone who is not short of historic memory would agree that the fight against Islam started long long time ago. Muhammad was just one man in Makkah. He came with an alien way of life which was immediately encountered with aggressive resistance. It took twenty three years and Muhammad's way of life (Islam) had dominated the Arabian Peninsula. Fast forward to 2010, Islam becomes visible in all corners of the earth. *Time* magazine has reported that about 60,000 books have been written in an attempt to discredit Islam over the past 150 years (i.e. between

208. Shaw, Sir George Bernard. The Genuine Islam. Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936.

209. Life of Mahomet. London: 1889, pp. 192-3, 199.

210. Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.p.48.

211. Zeitvogel, Karin. "Major survey challenges Western perceptions of Islam." Daily News Egypt 27 Feb. 2008; "Survey challenges Western perceptions of Islam." China Daily 28 Feb. 2008.

1800 and 1950).[212] To break it down that is 33 books per month! Or a book every day! Despite the battle of the hearts and minds, Islam is still the fastest growing religion in the globe. Be you an individual fighting against Islam. Be you a pseudo-scholar mounting ad hominem attacks on Islam. Be you a missionary group against the prosperity of Islam. Be you a government against Islamic renaissance. Be you a coalition of the willing against the Islamic domination. Be you the Satan bent on averting Muslims from going to Paradise. But according to Muslims, the sad news for you is explicitly announced in their Qur'an:

> Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people] from the way of Allah. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; *then they will be overcome*. And those who have disbelieved – unto Hell they will be gathered. [Q 8:36]

Let us explain this verse to a ten-year old kid. The verse says that they are people who spend their wealth to extinguish . . . Oops . . . to fight the religion of Islam. And God says that they will spend their wealth but they won't succeed and at the end they will be defeated. Meaning the religion of Islam will conquer. That's not all. The verse says that those who fought the religion of Islam, when they die, they will go to Hell. If it is confirmed that God's grand plan is to make Islam victorious over all religions, then those trying to frustrate God's plan will undoubtedly loose. "They want to extinguish the light of Allah (i.e. the religion of Islam) with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although those who associate others with Allah dislike it." [Q 61:8-9 Also see Q 9:32] For those who refuse to learn from peoples mistakes, might as well try to disapprove the previous verse by waging war against Islam. Some Muslims will hitback by saying, "your lifespan does not exceed 120 years before you see fast-results in the grave." False systems of life perished in the dustbin of history. Once upon a time, there was communism. Now it's gone. Twentieth century marked the collapse of fascism. The Roman Empire didn't last. Capitalism is on the brink of collapse. However, Islam as a system is seen to have the full potential of dominating the planet. It seems that Islam is a true and practical system of life. Friday 8 May 1840, one of the greatest thinkers of the past century, Thomas Carlyle delivered a series of lectures to Christian audience in England, under the theme - *Heroes and Hero-worship.* One of his lectures went like:

> A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! If he does not know and follow truly the properties of mortar, burnt clay and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish heap. It will not stand for twelve centuries,* to lodge a hundred-and eighty millions;* it will fall straightaway . . . speciosities are specious . . . it is like a forged bank note; they get it passed out of their worthless hands: others, not they, have to smart for it. Nature bursts-up in fire-flames, French revolutions and such-like, proclaiming with the terrible veracity that forged notes are forged.[213]

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212. "Islam, Orientalism And the West" Time 16 April 1979.

* Now Islam has survived for fourteen centuries since the advent of Prophet Muhammad. To be precise for 1443 years.
* Now, Muslims are 1.57 billion. See Beaumont, Peter. "One in four people is Muslim, says study." Guardian 8 Oct. 2009; Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. "Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population." 8 Oct. 2009.

213. Carlyle, Thomas. Heroes and Hero-worship. p. 58.

More prophetic words are found in *The Great Heresies* written by a catholic Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) who was a prolific writer and historian:

> Whatever the cause be, Mohammedanism has survived, and vigorously survived. Missionary effort has had no appreciable effect upon it. It still converts pagan savages wholesale. It even attracts from time to time some European eccentric, who joins its body. But the Mohammedan never becomes a Catholic. No fragment of Islam ever abandons its sacred book, its code of morals, its organized system of prayer, its simple doctrine. In view of this, anyone with a knowledge of history is bound to ask himself whether *we shall not see in the future a rival of Mohammedan political power*, and the renewal of the old pressure of Islam on Christendom.[214]

Despite Islam being the most-fought-against religion, history is recording phenomenal growth of Islam. History tells us that in the middle ages, not less than eight crusades were launched against Islam. According to the Conspiracy theory, analysts believe September 11 was an inside job designed to get international consent for attacking terrorists. Contemporary definition of terrorist is a Muslim, especially the practicing one and those who diasagree, let them grow a beard, go to the airport and see how intensive the security will be at the checkpoints. Assuming September 11 was indeed an inside job then we can unanimously conclude that it was a boomerang. CAIR (Council for American-Islamic Relations) chairman Nihad Awad told the Saudi paper *'Ukaz* that "34,000 Americans have converted to Islam following the events of September 11, and this is the highest rate reached in the U.S. since Islam arrived there."[215] And Alaa Bayumi, the Director of Arab Affairs for CAIR, wrote in *Al-Hayat* that, "The Americans are showing increasing willingness to convert to Islam since September 11 . . . " *The Observer* mentioned an *'11 September factor'* for the upsurge of interest in Islam and probably the impetus behind Britons embracing Islam in droves.[216]

An article in USA Today reports that:

> The 9/11 tragedy caused the growth of Islam in America to accelerate greatly. One of the clearest indications of this is that after the attacks, the Qur'an became the best-selling book in many states for a long time. American interest in the Qur'an increased to such an extent that Penguin Books, one of the best-known publishers of the Qur'an in English, reported that it had printed 20,000 extra copies after 9/11.[217]

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214. Belloc, Hilaire. The Great Heresies. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938. p.130.

215. Bayumi, Alaa. "Muslim American Leaders: A Wave of Conversion to Islam in the U.S. Following September 11." Al-Hayat 11 Nov. 2001; Also see Whittell, Giles. "Allah Came Knocking At My Heart." The Times 7 Jan. 2002; Jiménez, Marina. "New Muslims." National Post 19 Jan. 2002; Ritz, Mary Kaye. "More in Hawai'i turn to Islam." Advertiser 11 Nov. 2001; Iqbal, Sajid. "September 11 and Conversions to Islam." The Revival 28 Jan 2006.

216. Bright, Martin. "Interest in Islam mounts after hijacking atrocity." The Observer 1 Sept. 2002.

217. Blais, Jacqueline. "People Want to Know, So Koran is Best Seller." USA Today 27 Nov. 2001; Also see Wilgoren, Jodi. "A Nation Challenged: American Muslims; Islam Attracts Converts By the Thousand, Drawn Before and After Attacks." The New York Times 22 Oct. 2001.

Jeremy Rifkin, a well-known American economist, author of *The Age of Access* and president of the Foundation on Economic Trends in Washington, is a case in point. He featured an article *The Guardian* with the following confessions:

> I'm ashamed to admit it, but before September 11, I didn't pay much attention to Islam. I had a cursory knowledge of the historical struggle between Israel and its Arab neighbors. I knew a bit about the struggle with the west over oil. I followed the comings and goings of Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Syria. But, when it comes to Islamic culture and history and its long engagement with the west, I was virtually ignorant. It took the deaths of 5,000 Americans in a horrific act of terrorism to get my attention. Like so many others, I have been reading up on Islam—its tenets, internal struggles, . . . visions . . . , its similarities and deep differences with Christianity and the West . . . . I'm not alone. Seven of the 15 lead books on the *New York Times* paperback bestseller list are devoted to Islam. The Koran has become a bestseller. The whole world, it seems, has been converted into a classroom as we try to make sense out of the tragic events of September 11 and its aftermath.[218]

The myopic antagonist of Islam, Salman Rushdie, thought he was doing Islam a great harm in blaspheming Islam with his *Satanic Verses*, but instead the whole scenario triggered people to examine Qur'an and Islam - as a result, thousands saw the truth in Islam and embraced it. Did Salman Rushdie wail reading from *The Observer* revealing:

> . . . At the same time he said there had been an average of two or three people asking to convert every month. A similar thing happened during the Salman Rushdie affair. A lot of people converted to Islam as they struggled to understand what was happening.[219]

If the 2003 Anglo-American invasion of Iraq was aimed at scaring or smashing any challenger of US hegemony, then "It's simply unbelievable how the [Iraq] war has revived the appeal of a global Jihadi Islam that was in real decline after Sept. 11" as observed by Mr. Gerges. In fact, Muslims have been "turning to their faith for solace and answers"[220] because of the Iraq war. We all know that when Muslims turn to Islam, they are going to obey Allah's command of jihad. When America invaded Iraq in desert storm operation, many of the US troops who were stationed in Saudi Arabia became Muslims during and shortly after the Gulf War. According to Hofmann's book, *Religion on the Rise*, ". . . 7,500 American soldiers converted to Islam in the wake of the Gulf War."[221] When the Danish newspaper portrayed a cartoon of the prophet, the series of protests and demonstrations made the non-Muslims to research on this much-revered man called Muhammad. Again it was a boomerang. Many westerners including Hollanders converted and thousands around the world followed the trend. Non-Muslims will say the Muslim God works in mysterious ways after reading: "So they plotted a plot, and We (i.e. God) planned a plan, while they perceived not." [Q 27:50]. To Muslims, the world works in harmony to God's *sunnah* (way/Formula) in that anyone fighting

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218. Rifkin, Jeremy. "Dialogue is a Necessity." The Guardian 13 Nov. 2001.

219. Bright, Martin. "Interest in Islam mounts after hijacking atrocity." The Observer 1 Sept. 2002.

220. LaFranchi, Howard. "Feeling under attack, Arabs turn to Islam for answers." The Christian Science Monitor 3 Nov. 2003.

221. Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001. p.198.

God's Religion will eventually be a looser. It is no mystery to Muslims. In *The Times* magazine, Lucy Berrington reports:

> The surge in conversions to Islam has taken place despite the negative image of the faith in the Western press. Indeed, the pace of conversions has accelerated since publicity over the Salman Rushdie affair, the Gulf War and the plight of the Muslims in Bosnia.[222]

And what about name-calling of Muslims, Andrew Norman Wilson, British essayist, journalist, and author's article showed that such an exercise bring unintended results:

> While the west tries to dub the followers of Islam fundamentalist lunatics, increasing numbers of people turn to the Koran and find in this book what they have always craved: a moral and an intellectual acknowledgement of the lordship of God without the encumbrance of Christian mythological baggage in which almost no one really believes. That is why Christianity will decline in this millennium, and the next religious hunger of the human heart will be answered by the Crescent, not by the Cross.[223]

Let us recapitulate the boomerang factor once again. Between 27 December 2008 and January 2009, the world witnessed a deadliest military offensive against innocent civilians in Gaza precipitating protestations and condemnations not only from the Muslim world but from the non-Islamic spheres. The Gaza war rendered more than 1000 civilians dead, many women and children. More than 5000 severely wounded. Not less than 25000 displaced. Journalists, doctors and rescue workers killed. Hospitals, health clinics, media studios, orphanages, and schools were destroyed by Israeli air and artillery shelling. Cluster bombs, phosphorus shells and other controversial weapons were used by Israel against innocent civilians. Don't you think that such oppression will automatically draw sympathy from both Muslims and non-Muslims? The Muslim solidarity and brotherhood espoused through the world demonstrations will make non-Muslims wonder, "Islam is a religion of unity, brotherhood, care and compassion . . . when Muslims sneeze they make the world catch a cold." To scripturally prove that Muslims are supposed to help one another, they will quote Prophet Muhammad saying, "You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it."[224]

All these wars against Muslims make Islam the world's most newsworthy religion. The media, the public, students and researchers would want to learn more about Islam. The consequences are quite predictable. Remember, most of the reverts profiled in this book embraced Islam after an encounter with either the Qur'an or other Islamic resources. The Israeli army annihilated not less than 1000 Palestinians, but how many non-Muslims around the world converted to Islam through the Gaza event? I don't have the statistics but according to the previous trends, it is highly probable that more than 1000 westerners converted to Islam.

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222. Berrington, Lucy. "The Spread of a World Creed." The Times 9 Nov. 1993.

223. Wilson, AN. "The Poisoned Chalice." Guardian 25 Nov. 2000.

224. Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 40.

Actions provoke reactions. After 19-day Israeli offensive against Palestinians, Osama Bin Laden rose to the occasion with his 22-minute audio message entitled *A Call for Jihad to Stop the Aggression against Gaza,* saying:

> Our brothers in Palestine, you have suffered a lot . . . the Muslims sympathise with you in what they see and hear. We, the mujahideen, sympathise with you also . . . . We are with you and we will not let you down. Our fate is tied to yours in fighting the Crusader-Zionist coalition, in fighting until victory or martyrdom . . . Only one strong way to bring the return of al-Aqsa and Palestine, and that is jihad in the path of God . . . . The duty is to urge people to jihad and to enlist the youth into jihad brigades . . . . Muslim nation, you are capable of defeating the Zionist entity with your popular capabilities and your great hidden strength.[225]

The Audio was accompanied with A photograph of Bin Laden and al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, Islam's third holiest shrine.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a former UN secretary-general, commented that the assault on Gaza, "is a present the Israelis gave to the fundamentalists. It will reinforce extremists, fundamentalists, all over Arab countries and even inside Israel,"[226] President Bashar al-Assad of Syria said, in an interview with the BBC that the effects of war could be, "sowing seeds of extremism and terror around the region."[227] Whatever reasons the "rogue and gangster" state of Israel (as described by Oxford University professor Avi Shlaim) had for such barbaric war, the result will only be a boomerang.

It seems that the best way to prevent the growth of Islam is for the antagonists to stop the war against the religion. The problem with this is that given the peaceful environment, Muslims will Islamize the world. The other way to try ". . . to extinguish the light of Allah (i.e. the religion of Islam) with their mouths . . . ."[Q 61:8] is to continue fighting Islam. The problem with this is that their efforts will boomerang and the consequences will be more people embracing Islam and more moderate Muslims transformed to jihadists with the goal of reconquring the world under the banner of Sharia law! Still we come to the principle, "you fight Islam it spreads, you don't fight Islam, it spreads." What do we do? Final suggestion which Muslims also recommend is: If you cannot beat Islam, nor organize for Islam to be beaten, then you had better join the religion. Without resistance. The very word Islam means "submission" and the enemies of Islam would do an honorary thing to just submit. Sometimes it is better to avoid fighting than run the risk of death especially after history flaunting a plethora of evidences that Islam is unbeatable.

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225. "Bin Laden urges war on Israel."News.bbc.co.uk 14 Jan. 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7829716.stm>; also see Naughton, Philippe. "Osama bin Laden calls for new jihad over Israeli offensive in Gaza." The Times 14 Jan. 2009; Keath, Lee. "Bin Laden urges jihad against Israel." The China Post 15 Jan. 2009.

226. "UN watchdog condemns war on Gaza." English.aljazeera.net 13 Jan. 2009._<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/01/200911215263578396 8.html>

227. Bronner, Ethan. "Egypt Cites Progress Toward Truce as Gaza Toll Exceeds 1,000." The New York Times 14 Jan. 2009.

In a speech given on 7 Decemeber, Patrick Buchanan - an American politician who had served as a senior advisor to American presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Ronald Reagan - found himself with no other words but to admit that "Islam has survived for nearly 1,600 years; it is the predominant faith in 57 countries; it is indestructible."[228] George Bernard Shaw agrees to the *going concern** of Islam. He says: "I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."[229] And if that is not enough, Bernard Lewis, a historian and the recipient of AEI's Irving Kristol Award for 2007 made his prediction in 2004 that Europe would be Islamic by the end of the century.[230]

The Sun Is Rising In The West

"Allah drew the ends of the world near one another for my sake. And I have seen its eastern and western ends. And the dominion of my Ummah (Nation) would reach those ends which have been drawn near me . . . ."[231]

~ Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam.

Prophet Muhammad predicted that among the signs of *Qiyama* (the Last Day) is that the sun will rise in the west. Yes, the prophet said that, "The Hour (the Last Day) will not be established till the sun rises from the West."[232] It has not yet happened but the sun, in the Muslim viewpoint, would *actually* rise from the west not in the east as normal. However, Islam means *Nur* (Light), Torch, Guidance, Source of Light just like the sun. But aren't we witnessing this 'sun' rising from the West? The Americans, the Europeans (the west) and the rest are coming to Islam thus Light *(Nur)* is seen coming from the West and not in the east where Islam first came from the Arabs. A sure sign that the Day of Judgment is around the corner. What do we do?

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228. Buchanan, Patrick J. "Coming Clash of Civilizations? theamericancause.org. 7 Dec. 2001. <http://www.theamerican-cause.org/patcomingclashprint.htm.>

* In accounting, "going concern" refers to a company's ability to continue functioning as a business entity. It determines whether the company will remain in existence for and beyond the foreseeable future. For that reason assessing an enterprise's ability to continue as a going concern is an important task in the financial accounting world. To analogize Islam as one big company, assessors would find no uncertainties which may cast significant doubt upon the Islam's ability to continue as a going concern. Despite the harsh wars against the religion, covert and overt, Islam is seen to continue in operation for the foreseeable future. Experts who searched through every nook and cranny of Islamic structure and history, unanimously agree that Islam is not only there to stay but to stay big.

229. Shaw, George Bernard. The Genuine Islam. Vol. 1, No. 81936.

230. Lewis, Bernard. "Europe and Islam." American Enterprise Institute. March 7, 2007 (AEI Annual Dinner, Irving Kristol Lecture :Washington)

231. Muslim Bk 41, No. 6904.

232. Bukhari Vol. 6, Bk. 60, No. 160; Muslim Bk. 41, No.7025; Muslim Bk. 41, No. 7039; Muslim Bk. 41, No. 7040.

Some would want us to do exactly what Muhammad did. After the Arabs in Makkah converted to Islam in droves, God revealed the last Chapter of the Qur'an called *An-Nasr* (The Help). The Prophet's companions endowed with sharp understanding read between the verses and knew head-knowledge that God was informing Muhammad that the end of his life has approached. In fact, Muhammad admitted the fact: "My death has been announced to me."[233] And indeed he died during that year. The chapter was revealed after the conquest of Makkah, where its inhabitants accepted Islam in unprecedented numbers. Other regions of Arab land had delayed their acceptance of Islam waiting for the conquest of Makkah. They said, "If he (Muhammad) is victorious over his people, then he is a (true) Prophet."[234] God gave Muhammad victory over Makkah, and they entered into Islam in crowds. Two years did not pass after the conquest of Makkah before the peninsula of the Arabs was laden with faith. And there did not remain any of the tribes of the Arabs except that they professed Islam.

Hence, God revealed the last chapter giving important orders to Muhammad. Contemporarily, we are witnessing the 'sun' rising from the west. History is recording a torrent of people embracing Islam. A clear sign from God that the end of times is near. Let's do what Muhammad was asked to do in the last Chapter to be revealed. May you read between the verses of Chapter *An-Nasr* (The Help).

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest,
And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes,
Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance.

[Q 110:1-3]

There is nothing better to conclude this part with than to say: "Glory to You, O Allah, our Lord, and praise be to You. O Allah, forgive me."[235]

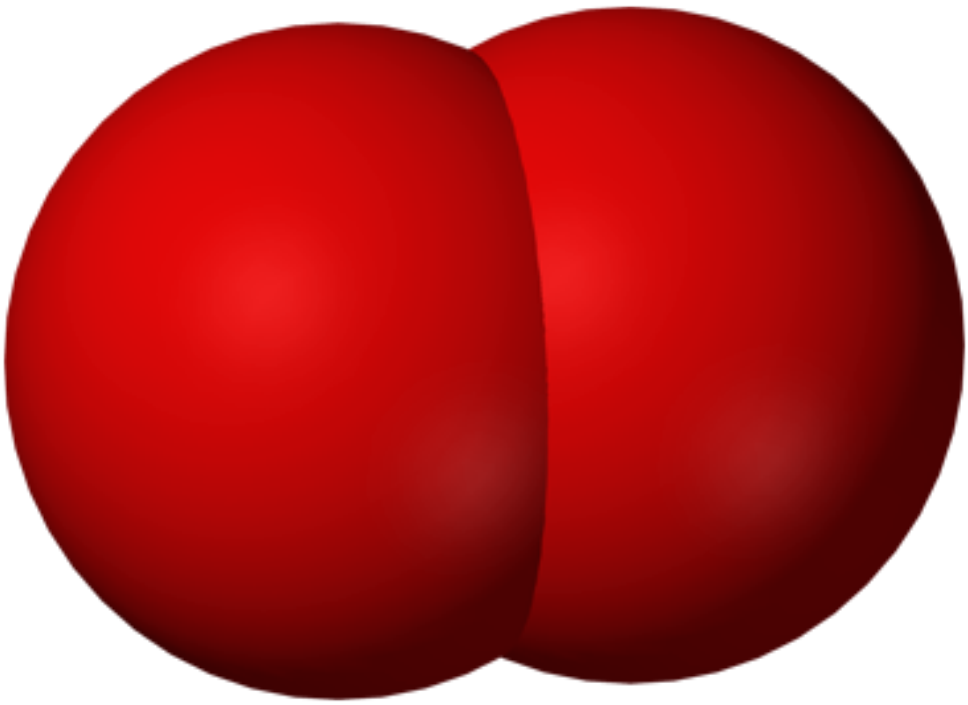
233. Ahmad 1:217. Also see Al-Mubarakpuri, SaifurRahman. Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged). Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers, 2000.Vol.10. p. 619.

234. Bukhari Vol. 5, Bk. 59, No. 595.

235. Bukhari recorded that A'ishah (the Prophet's wife) said that the Messenger of Allah used to say often in his bowing and prostrating these words. See Bukhari Vol. 6, Bk. 60, No. 491; Al-Mubarakpuri, SaifurRahman. Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged). Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers, 2000.p. 619.

PART 3

JESUS WAS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE



A molecule of Oxygen. Without oxygen, there is no life. The word life miraculously appears in the following statement of Jesus Christ: "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." [John 17:3]

"Religion is equally important as oxygen"

~ The author

God Openeth their Breast to Islam

We are asked to, "Say: "If I am astray, I only stray to the loss of my own soul: but if I receive guidance, it is because of the inspiration of my Lord to me: it is He Who hears all things, and is (ever) near." [Q 34:50] Hence, whatever the reason for your reversion to Islam is, it's not important. You may have found Islam due to a sincere search for truth, to marry a Muslim, in quest for social integration, out of curiosity, dissatisfaction for your former religion, in search of adventure, coincidence, in search of an alternative way of living, or because you followed the dictates of your heart, for no explicit reason, or Islam just found you . . . whatever the reason is, bear in mind that it's not your intelligence, not your Muslim boyfriend, not your curiosity, not even by mistake or chance that guided you but in the big picture, its God, the Merciful that guided you to Islam. Stop bragging. This is because the Qur'an says:

> So whoever Allah wants to guide – He expands his breast to [contain] Islam; and whoever He wants to misguide – He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky. Thus does Allah place defilement upon those who do not believe. And this is the path of your Lord, [leading] straight. We have detailed the verses for a people who remember.
>
> [Q 6:125-126]

From the above verses, we find that:

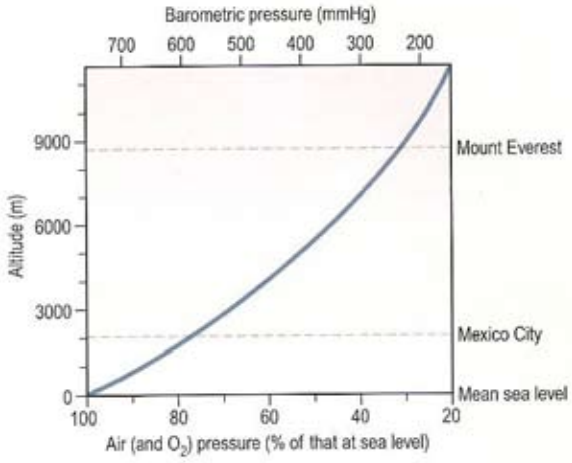
i) Altitude sickness is due to shortage of oxygen

If you chat with mountain climbers, trekkers, and skiers they will tell you that in high altitudes, the air is thinner and temperatures are usually much colder and less oxygen presence, unlike that of sea level. It is a scientific fact that ". . . oxygen falls in a near-linear relationship to altitude . . . ."[236] The higher you go above sea level, the less oxygen there is to breathe. Thus anyone ascending to high altitude experiences health complications such as 'Altitude sickness', a term used to describe any altitude-related illness which comprise of potentially life-threatening ailments. Experts agree that all forms of altitude sickness are caused by low levels of oxygen at very high altitudes. There are three forms of altitude sickness that can affect people ascending to high altitude; Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE, a form of mountain sickness characterized by brain swelling. It accounts for most deaths from high-altitude illness) and High

236. Kumar, Parveen and Michael Clark. Clinical Medicine. 6th ed. Edinburg: Elsevier Limited, 2005. Also see, Guyton, Arthur C. Textbook of Medical Physiology. 8th ed. India: Prism Books Limited, 1991.p.464.

Altitude Pulmonary Edema, (HAPE, another form of mountain sickness characterized by fluid in the lungs).[237]

As elevation rises, however, atmospheric pressure goes down as the atmosphere becomes thinner. Therefore, the amount of oxygen entering the blood stream declines and it becomes harder to breathe. As the air sacs grow narrow and contract, we feel as if we cannot breathe. If the amount of oxygen in the blood is less than the body needs, several symptoms emerge: extreme fatigue, headaches, dizziness, nausea, and loss of judgement. When a certain height is reached, it finally becomes impossible for a human being to breathe at all.[238]



The decrease in oxygen and barometric pressure with increasing altitude. (*Clinical Medicine*, Kumar and Clark, p.1027)

The symptoms of Mild AMS include: Headache, nausea and dizziness, loss of appetite, fatigue, shortness of breath, disturbed sleep, general feeling of malaise. The signs and symptoms of Moderate AMS include: Severe headache that is not relieved by medication, nausea, and vomiting, increasing weakness and fatigue, shortness of breath, dyspnea, insomnia, anorexia and decreased co-ordination (ataxia). Symptoms of Severe AMS include: Shortness of breath at rest, inability to walk, decreasing mental status, fluid build-up in the lungs. Symptoms of HAPE include: Fatigue and weakness, dyspnea, nausea, sleeplessness progress to visible cyanosis, shortness of breath at rest, tightness in the chest, tachypnea, persistent cough productive of copious sputum, feeling of impending suffocation at night, confusion, and irrational behavior. Confusion and irrational behavior are signs that insufficient oxygen is reaching the brain. Symptoms of HACE include: Headache, weakness, disorientation, loss of co-ordination, decreasing levels of consciousness, loss of memory, hallucinations and psychotic behavior, coma.

ii) The Qur'anic verse is undeniably a Scientific Miracle

It's amazing to find that God analogise the misguided as if he were climbing up into the sky having his breast narrow and constricted. And indeed, anyone whose sole purpose in life is to climb mountains is truly misguided. Does he really know the purpose of life? I mean, there are better things to do than climb mountains. Anyway, the scientific miracle is that the Qur'an accurately reveals that the breast of someone climbing up the sky becomes narrow and constricted.

237. Franzen, Harald. "Scientists explain High-Altitude Sickness." Scientific American 24 April 2001. < http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=scientists-explain-high-a>; Peter H. Hackett, M.D., Robert C. Roach, Ph.D. "High-Altitude Illness." The New England Journal of Medicine 12 July 2001. Vol. 345:107-114; Morton, Ronald L. "High-Altitude Cardiopulmonary Diseases" emedicine.com.1Dec. 2008. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1006029-overview>; Also visit, www.altitude.org.

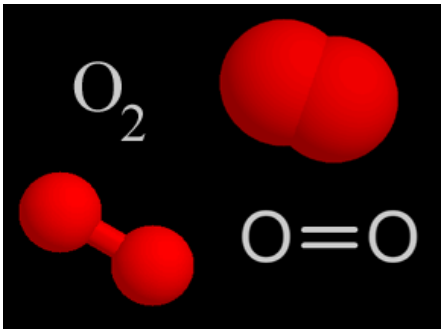
238. Medical Encyclopedia. Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton; <www.rwjhamilton.org/Atoz/Encyclopedia/article/000133.asp>

Read the verse again.

> So whoever Allah wants to guide – He expands his breast to [contain] Islam; and whoever He wants to misguide – He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky. [Q 6:125]

The above verse which was revealed more than 1430 years ago miraculously reveal a scientific fact that with altitude rise the climber's breast becomes narrow and constricted.

iii) <u>The verse indirectly commands us to ponder on the cause of altitude sickness: Oxygen</u>



These are four different ways chemists use to show a molecule of oxygen. In colored molecule models like these, oxygen is usually red. All the four ways show a molecule of oxygen having two atoms.

Let's consider this phenomenon of oxygen decrease on rising altitude for a moment. The cause of the altitude-related compilations is because you are in an oxygen-poor environment. The highly inquisitive mind will see the Qur'anic verse we read as directing us to ponder on oxygen. Because shortage of oxygen is the cause of all these mayhem. "So why oxygen, and what is oxygen, its structure, and its significance," the ingenious mind would inquire.

Shedding some light on oxygen we would find that oxygen consists of *two* oxygen atoms covalently linked. *The World Book Encyclopedia* agrees that "Ordinary oxygen molecules, such as those that make up about 20 per cent of atmosphere, have two oxygen atoms bonded together."[239] We will also learn that oxygen is life. You can live for weeks without water, and for months without food, but without oxygen, only a few moments are enough for us to say goodbye to you. Startlingly, Collier's Encyclopedia reveals that, "The name "oxygen"-from the Greek *oxys* meaning "acid" and *gen* meaning "to be born" was given to this element . . . ."[240] Thus we see that the word oxygen is derived from greek word "to be born" and as we know when you are born it means life.

Oxygen has almost endless roles in your life. Your brain demands at least 20% of the body's oxygen supply. Oxygen in the blood stream nourishes the body's cells, creates energy and helps break down waste products and toxins. It creates immune system defense thus playing a crucial role in the fight against disease. Cardiovascular physiologist Dr Arthur Guyton MD has been quoted as saying "All chronic suffering is caused from lack of oxygen at the cell level." It is a proven fact that oxygen deficiency eventually leads to disease or illness of some form. "Insufficient oxygen means insufficient biological energy that can result in anything from mild fatigue to life threatening disease" as quoted by Dr W Spencer Way- who wrote in the *Journal of the American Association of Physicians*.

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239. <u>The World Book Encyclopedia</u>. Chicago: World Book Inc., 2001. Vol. 14. p. 889.

240. <u>Collier's Encyclopedia</u>. Vol. 18. Crowell Collier and Macmillan, Inc., 1966.p. 268.

Oxygen deficiency can cause a wide range of conditions, some of these are: premature aging, body weakness, muscle aches and pains, stress and anxiety, dizziness, depression, irritability, irrational behavior, malaise, lassitude, fatigue, circulation problems, poor digestion, acid stomach and bronchial complications, tumors and deposit buildups, memory loss, colds and flu, and the body becomes more susceptible to opportunistic bacteria, viral and parasitic infections.

Dr Paris Kid PhD is quoted as saying: "We can look at oxygen deficiency as the single greatest cause of all disease!" It is a proven fact that diseases such as cancer and AIDS, herpes and hepatitis, cannot tolerate high oxygen cells in the blood stream. Hence the importance of oxygenating the blood. In the 1940s, Nobel Laureate Dr. Otto Warburg stated emphatically that all disease is ultimately related to oxygen starvation. He asserted that cancer and other infections or diseases cannot live in an oxygen-rich environment. More recently, Dr. Stephen Levine has been saying the same thing: "hypoxia, meaning low oxygen levels in the cells, results in disease. If we can get our oxygen level up to about 80 percent, then we can really detoxify the body, wipe out infections and boost our health, vitality and natural intelligence enormously."

With a reduced supply of oxygen, our immune system suffers because it requires oxygen to kill off foreign invaders like viruses, fungi and pathogenic bacteria. Moreover, the ability to think, feel, move, eat, sleep and even talk all depends on the energy oxygen generates. Your brain also needs oxygen to process information. Low oxygen levels are undesirable because they affect the body's cell metabolism and may even cause it to manufacture improper chemicals, giving rise to various health problems. A shortage of oxygen in the blood could very well be the starting point for the loss of the immune system and the beginning point of health problems like cancer, leukemia, AIDS, seizures, nerve deterioration and candida. Oxygen deprivation trigger life-threatening diseases, as underscored by Nobel Laureate Dr. Otto Warburg's assertion that cancer and other infections or diseases cannot live in an oxygen-rich environment. Dr. Stephen Levine, a renowned Molecular Biologist and Geneticist author of *Oxygen Deficiency: A Concomitant to All Degenerative Illness* states:

> In all serious disease states we find a concomitant low oxygen state . . . Low oxygen in the body tissues is a sure indicator for disease . . . Hypoxia, or lack of oxygen in the tissues, is the fundamental cause for all degenerative disease. Oxygen is the source of life to all cells.

iv) <u>Hence Oxygen denotes True Religion</u>

"Come forth into the light of things/Let nature be your teacher" are the words of William Wordsworth. To that effect, we will give an analytical look at the atmosphere and see what nature has to teach us. Having seen the structure of oxygen and the importance of living in an oxygen-rich environment, we would correlate oxygen and True religion. There is undoubtedly a perfect commonality between oxygen and True Religion. Regardless of your skin color, weight, height, geographical location, IQ . . . you must breath in oxygen despite existence of many other gases. There is absolutely no substitute for oxygen. Even when you are given the choice to choose between oxygen and the noble gases, you will categorically discard the noble gases however noble they are. Much the same, man must adhere to One True religion for survival and discard other false religions. Hence, 'your-religion-is-right-my-religion-is-right' attitude is anesthesia to reality. Just as we need to discard even the noble gases and depend on oxygen *alone* for survival, we also need

to discard all false religions and follow just *one* true religion.

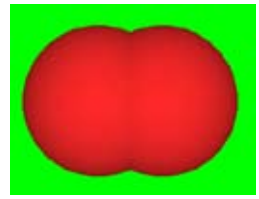
Those claiming that all the ways lead to God contend that Jesus was either a lunatic, a liar or a joker when he solemnly asserted an absolute exclusivity of the way leading to heaven: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" [John 14:6]. But since we know Jesus was ". . . a Word from God" [Q 3:45], ". . . a spirit proceeding from God" [Q 4:171], ". . . a sign for the worlds" [Q 21:91], ". . . *holy*" [Q 19:19], ". . . a Man attested by God . . . ." [Acts 2:22] and a man who was frequently, constantly and emphatically truthful, we would rationally conclude that the biblical verse emphasizes *one* Way, *one* Religion, *one* System, *one* Formula, *one* Path, *one* Guidance, *one* Roadmap, *one* Belief, *one* Faith, *one* Plan of Salvation, *one* Ideology, *one* Sect, *one* Theism, *one* Law, *one* World-View, *one* Mindset, *one* Philosophy, *one* Manual, one Framework, *one* World-Order, *one* Affiliation, *one* Denomination, *one* Creed, *one* Lifestyle . . . .Whatever name you would like to call it, it is still *one*. It is no-brainer that when everyone is credible, no one is credible hence all religions can't all be right. We just have to agree with Jesus that there is only one true religion. But which one was the religion endorsed by Jesus? Was it Christianity or Islam? And was Jesus a Christian or a Muslim? In the Bible, there was a group of people to whom Jesus addressed them by saying, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." [John 8:19] In that line of judgment, is it possible that there are also some people in this 21st Century who have not yet known Jesus, including Jesus' religion? Maybe yes maybe no!

In Islam, there is no head-butting about the way leading to heaven. Unlike Christians, Muslims will give you *scriptural evidence* for that one way which leads to heaven.* They will just quote from the Qur'an the verse that says, "Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. . . ." [Q 3:19]. And if they find that you didn't understand, they will quote another easy-to-comprehend verse that reads: "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islâm, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." [Q3:85]. Muslims may further declare that all the previous Prophets practiced one religion and they would quote: "He (Allâh) has ordained for you the same religion (Islâm) which He ordained for Noah, and that which We have inspired in you (O Muhammad), and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus saying you should establish religion (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically), and make no divisions in it (religion). . . ." [Q42:13]

*One of the unparalleled strength of Islam is that the name of the religion itself is scripturally given by God, whereas, Christianity is a name coined by enemies of the followers of Jesus. In his book Mis'Goded, Dr. Laurence B. Brown writes: "Notably, Jesus never identified himself as a Christian and never claimed to have established Christianity on earth. In fact, while the word Christian is encountered three times in the Bible (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; Peter 4:16), none of these verses utilize the label Christian in a context which bears the authority of Jesus or of God. Most significantly, there is no record of the word Christian ever issuing from the lips of Jesus. We read in Acts 11:26 that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch"—which means the term Christian was first applied to the disciples by non-believers around 43 CE. It was not a polite term. Contrary to popular belief, the term Christian appears to have been conceived in contempt. Christian is what disbelievers called the followers of Christ—a distasteful name to believers who knew themselves as Jews, following the latest in the line of Jewish prophets. And yet, that very label is now worn with pride . . . the term Christian was a derogatory label imposed upon believers by their enemies. And yet, the term stuck and with typical Christian humility, was eventually accepted." See Brown, Laurence B. MisGod'ed: A Roadmap of Guidance and Misguidance in the Abrahamic Religions. USA: BookSurge Publishing, 2007.pp. 2-6.

When a Muslim reads John 14:6 he may recall that Sharia means 'way' or 'path'. Reverend Ane Mulder, former staff member with the Islam Open Doors International Study Center states: "The root meaning of sharia is 'way, path, road and highway'. Its primary use was to designate the camel's path to the well, the path to life."[241] At this revelation, a Muslim will jump and proffer that Jesus may have said "I am the Sharia, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through my Sharia" [John 14:6].

So according to Jesus, the way leading to heaven is just one and if you don't know Jesus, then you better know that he is not a joker. This is a man who said "He who is not with Me is against Me . . . ." [Mathew 12:30]. This means that if you don't follow the religion of Jesus, you are a self-declared enemy of Jesus. No tolerance. Some consider the *American Way of Life* as the only way which leads to heaven. Others have 'convincingly' found the *Way of Jesus* as echoed in their "No Salvation outside the Church" declarations: "No man can find salvation except in the Catholic Church. Outside the Catholic Church one can have everything except salvation." (St. Augustine, 354-430); "The Most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, also Jews, heretics, and schismatics can ever be partakers of eternal life, but that they are to go into the eternal fire . . ." (Pope Eugene IV in the *Bull Cantate Domino*, 1441); "There is one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all can be saved." (Pope Innocent III, ex cathedra, Fourth Lateran Council, 1215); "We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." (Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*, 1302). For Verses which imply exclusivity of the way to heaven see Mark 16:16, John 3:16-18; Gal. 1:8; Acts 4:12.



Remember, we earlier showed that a molecule of oxygen contains two atoms. That is to say that oxygen is made up of two parts. Similarly, the *true religion* is made up of two parts. At the time of Jesus the two parts for salvation were disclosed by Jesus himself saying, "And this is eternal *life*, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." [John 17:3] Please pay attention to Jesus words, he chooses his words carefully. Remember oxygen is *life*, and Jesus is talking about eternal *life*. Also recall that oxygen is made up of two parts and according to Jesus, true religion is also made up of two parts. The two parts are also evident in John 14:1, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."

Therefore, life eternal as defined by Jesus consists of these two parts:

►The first part: *to believe in one God (i.e. follow all His commands)*
►The second part: *believe that Jesus is the Messenger of God (i.e. follow what Jesus taught).* That is simply because "He who obeys the Messenger, has indeed obeyed God." [Q 4:80] This is similar to ". . . whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me" [Luke 10:16] and somehow close to Jesus' answer, ". . . My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me." [John 7:16] and not far from "for I have come down from heaven, not to do

241. Moeller, Carl. "The 'Path of Life' to Muslims, Sharia Law Walls Off Christians." Open Doors USA 18 Nov. 2009. <http://www.crosswalk.com/news/culture/11616976/>

my own will, but the will of him who sent me." [John 6:38] To understand this concept clearly, consider the sun and the moon. They are two sources of light in our planet. And the messengers were undoubtedly lights to which we can find guidance. Jesus was "The true *light*, which enlightens everyone. . . ." [John 1:9]. Jesus acknowledged the fact that he is light by saying, "I am the *light* . . . ." [John 8:12]. On the other hand, Muhammad has also been referred as a light. The Qur'an reads: "O Prophet! Truly We have sent thee as a Witness, a Bearer of Glad Tidings, and Warner. And as one who invites to Allah's (grace) by His leave, and as a lamp spreading *light*." [Q 33:45-46]. In another verse, the Quran states: ". . . those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the *light* which is sent down with him,- it is they who will prosper." [Q 7:157]

As in the rain forest, trees, plants and vines strugle with each other for sunlight, human beings should likewise strugle for the light emanating from God's messangers. Now, we all know that the moonlight does not originate from the moon, but it is reflected sunlight. The sun is a star which makes its own light and heat through nuclear reactions, but the moon is just a ball of rocks that reflect light. Meaning without the sun, the moon is lightless. Similarly, Jesus or Muhammad get their guidance or light from God, without which, they remain in darkness. No wonder Jesus admits: "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me." [John 5:30]. Same to Muhammad, for he was commanded by God to say ". . . I am not a new thing among the Messengers (of Allâh) (i.e. I am not the first Messenger) nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am but a plain warner." [Q 46:9] It is crucial to state that the analogy of sun and moon is not meant to equate sun with God for "There is nothing like unto Him (i.e. like God)" [Q 42:11]. Those who might be tempted to worship the sun and the moon should realize that these are signs of God and hence they should worship the Creator of sun and moon. The Qur'an says: "And from among His Signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate not to the sun nor to the moon, but prostrate to Allâh Who created them, if you (really) worship Him." [Q 41:37]

We have seen the parts of salvation as disclosed by Jesus Himself. Similarly for one to survive, he needs oxygen which is made up of two parts. Therefore the true religion consists of the two, one God and His Messenger. Muslims strictly believe that in these contemporary times, salvation comes through following the last Messenger, Muhammad. The two parts of true religion are manifested in the words of Prophet Muhammad:

> If anyone testifies that None has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone Who has no partners, and that Muhammad is His Slave and His Apostle, and that Jesus is Allah's Slave and His Apostle and His Word which He bestowed on Mary and a Spirit created by Him, and that Paradise is true, and Hell is true, Allah will admit him into Paradise with the deeds which he had done even if those deeds were few.[242]

Just like Jesus, Muhammad appears to be very strict about the way to salvation. Muhammad is reported to have said, "By Him(Allah) Whose Hand Muhammad's soul is, there is none from

242. Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 55, No. 644.

amongst the Jews and the Christians (of these present nations) who hears about me and then dies without believing in the Message with which I have been sent (i.e. Islamic Monotheism), but he will be from the dwellers of the (Hell) Fire."[243] The two components of a true religion are also manifested in Muhammad's statement: "He who obeys me, obeys Allah, and he who disobeys me, disobeys Allah."[244] God Himself, in His own words, acknowledges these two parts of a true religion when he ordered: "Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger . . . ." [Q 5:92 Also see Q 64:12,Q 58:46, Q 24:51, Q 24:53, Q 4:59, Q 4:69, Q 47:33, Q 49:14] It is very logical, and no one can resist, that at the time of Moses, the life eternal was that, "they might know thee, the only true God, and Moses whom thou has sent." Moreover, it is very likely that Moses, just like Jesus, did not tolerate other religions. I can visualize Moses proclaiming: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (i.e. through me Moses)"

v) Symptoms of (true) Religion Deficiency

What are some of the symptoms of (true) religion deficiency? Like the symptoms of oxygen deficiency, symptoms of religion deficiency include depression, malaise, lassitude, confusion and irrational behavior to mention a few. If oxygen deficiency or shortage of oxygen on ascending higher altitudes causes many complications, similarly one with religion deficiency ". . . verily, for him is a life of hardship . . . ." [Q 20:124]. No wonder, many reverts to Islam confess that they found peace of mind, true happiness in Islam. The Qur'an is replete with messages such as, ". . . whoever follows My Guidance (i.e. Islam) shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery." [Q 20:123]. It has been confirmed that, "Nearly two-thirds of ailments seen in doctors' offices are adversely affected by stress; indeed, stress can both cause diseases and exacerbate existing ones. Surveys indicate that 60 percent of Americans feel they are under a great deal of stress at least once a week. Costs due to stress from absenteeism, medical expenses, and lost productivity are estimated at $300 billion annually."[245] So if that is the case, the search for the best treatment for stress and other problems becomes a crucial undertaking.

vi) Treatment for (true) religion deficiency

Specialists say that if you do have acute mountain sickness, the best treatment is descent. Meaning they should move from a low-oxygen- atmosphere to enough-oxygen atmosphere. In the medical advice of Dr. Know of *The Sunday Times*, "Medication such as acetazolamide and dexamethasone can treat AMS symptoms, but the *only cure* is either acclimatisation or descent."[246] According to *Clinical Medicine*, edited by Professor Parveen Kumar and Doctor Michael Clark, the recommended treatment for high altitude illness is that "oxygen should be given if available, and descent to a lower altitude should take place as quickly as possible."[247]

243. Muslim Bk. 1, No. 284.

244. Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 52, No. 204.

245. The Society for Neuroscience. Brain Facts: A Primer on the Brain and Nervous System. Washington, DC: The Society for Neuroscience, 2008.p.31.

246. "Dr Know."Sunday Times. 3 Aug. 2008. You can have more inquiry with DoctorKnow through the email: Doc@sunday-times.co.uk

247. Kumar, Parveen and Michael Clark. Clinical Medicine. 6th ed. Edinburg: Elsevier Limited, 2005. p. 1028.

Hence, for people who want peace of mind and trouble-free life, they should descend to true religion. No substitute. Dr. Stephen Levine has been asserting that, "hypoxia, meaning low oxygen levels in the cells, results in disease. If we can get our oxygen level up to about 80 percent, then we can really detoxify the body, wipe out infections and boost our health, vitality and natural intelligence enormously." Similarly, ". . . whoever Allah wants to guide – He expands his breast to [contain] Islam; and whoever He wants to misguide – He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky." [Q 6:125]

Just like oxygen is vital, Islam - if it is the true religion – then it will boost your health, vitality and give you life both on earth and in the Kingdom of Heaven. And as there is presence of oxygen on the whole of earth's atmosphere, Islam is also likely to be visible throughout the world. To add amazement to the heap of surprises, you will find that in the Holy Qur'an Islam is referred to as "Life". A prototypical example is this verse: "O you who believe! Answer Allâh (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you *life* (i.e. Islam). . . ." [Q 8:24. Also see, Q 16:97]. Now, shall we all descend to Islam? Oh Thank you.

SUMMARY

Due to elaborate details in this chapter and to avoid missing the forest for the trees, the following enumerated points will serve as a summary to what the evidences have concluded:

1. The Qur'an revealed that attitude sickness is due to shortage of oxygen [Q 6:125-126]. In this, the Qur'an has indubitably pointed out a scientific fact.
2. Qur'an declares that for a person to have a life which is stress-free, he must contain Islam.
3. The Qur'an states that those living with distress, misery and hardships are simply lacking Islam in their lives.
4. The Qur'an, the Bible and logic agrees that there is only one true religion and the rest are false. Just like on earth, we have to abandon even the noble gases and take up oxygen for survival, likewise we need to discard all religions save one true religion.
5. The Qur'an equates Islam with Oxygen. That is, for a healthy and better life, a human being must have sufficient oxygen. Similarly peace of mind, happiness and better life will be achieved if people embraced Islam. We all know that *oxygen is Life* many are unaware that in the Qur'an *Islam referred to as Life*. [Q 8:24; Q 16:97].
6. If oxygen is synonymised with Islam, we may be curious to find out what's common between the two. What is oxygen made up of and what is Islam made up of?
7. And we would discover that oxygen is made up of *two atoms* and Islam is made up of *two Testimonies*. The triatomic oxygen, (i.e. O3 or commonly known as Ozone) does not support life. In fact "Ozone is quite toxic. Continued breathing of air with more than very low concentration of ozone will cause headaches and other unpleasant effects."[248] For oxygen to support life it has to come in a package of two. Similarly in Islam, you must believe in the two testimonies. The testimonies are: 1) To testify that none is to be worshiped but strictly One God and 2) To testify that Muhammad is the Messenger

248. Collier's Encyclopedia. Vol. 18. Crowell Collier and Macmillan, Inc., 1966.p. 271.

of God. If you believe in One God yet you deny Muhammad, you are not a Muslim. And if you believe in Prophethood of Muhammad but disbelieve in One God, still you are a *kafir*. For you to enter God's paradise you must accept the two testimonies. This concept is in line with Jesus' statement ". . . whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me" [Luke 10:16] and Qur'anic statement "He who obeys the Messenger (i.e. Muhammad), has indeed obeyed God." [Q 4:80] And hence the disappearance of confusion regarding Jesus statement "I and My Father are one." [John 10:30]

8. Hence, the people of Moses were Muslims because they didn't believe in Trinity (i.e. they believed in one God) and they also believed that no one will go to God except through Moses. The followers of Jesus were Muslims because they believed both in one God and that Jesus is the Messenger of God. This is the meaning of Jesus' statement ". . . No one comes to the Father except through me" [John 14:6]. The two testimonies for salvation were disclosed by Jesus himself saying, "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." [John 17:3; Also see John 14:1] Similarly, the nation of Muhammad is Muslim because they believe in the two testimonies: "There is none to be worshipped except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger."
9. As according to Clinical Medicine, edited by Professor Parveen Kumar and Doctor Michael Clark, the recommended treatment for high altitude illness is that "oxygen should be given if available, and descent to a lower altitude should take place as quickly as possible."[249] Similarly the recommended treatment for life problems is that *Islam should be given and descent to Islamic society* should take place as quickly as possible.

NOW, you can reread the entire Chapter to fully understand the concept.

If my Name is Rocky and my Father's is Stone, Mahogany being the Surname, Should I Change the Names?

It is not mandatory for a revert to Islam to change his or her original name. Those who reverted to Islam during the prophet's lifetime were not asked to change their names. Abu-Bakr, who would later be the first *caliph* of Islam, converted to Islam and Muhammad kept calling him Abu-Bakr. Omar, the second *caliph* of Islam when he reverted to Islam he retained his name; Omar. And the trend goes on. The prophet would only request someone to change his name if that name denotes an ill-message. We all know that a name is often the first thing that gives an impression of a person and if you have a good name you are likely to have a positive mental attitude. And vice versa.

Prophet Muhammad was indeed a positive thinker and a motivationalist, as reported by his wife Aisha: "The Prophet used to change a bad name."[250] For example the prophet changed the names Zahm, (which means being in a tight or overcrowded place or situation) to Basheer (which means a herald bringing happy news.) On hearing someone named Hazn (Rugged or Rough Ground), immediately, the Prophet suggested a change of name and said to him, "You are Sahl (meaning

249. Kumar, Parveen and Michael Clark. Clinical Medicine. 6th ed. Edinburg: Elsevier Limited, 2005. p. 1028.

250. Tirmidhi 4774

easy and lenient)."[251] A woman called Aassiyah (Disobedient), was given a better name by the prophet telling her: "You are (now called) Jameelah (meaning Pretty)."[252] A delegation came to the Prophet and he heard them calling someone Abd al-Hajar (slave of the stone). He asked him: "What is your name?" and he said, Abd al-Hajar. He said, "No, you are Abd-Allah (the slave of Allah)."[253] The prophet was very realistic and disdained improbable goals harbored by ineffectual dreamers. He once said, "The most awful (meanest) name in Allah's sight is (that of) a man calling himself king of kings."[254] To claim to be the king of kings is not only delusional and unrealistic but such a title belongs to God alone. More examples are that prophet Muhammad changed the name Harb (War) and called him Silm (Peace). He changed the name Al-Munba'ith (one who lies) and called him Al-Mudtaji (one who stands up). He changed the name of a land Afrah (Barren) and called it Khadrah (Green). He changed the name Shi'b ad-Dhwalalah (the mountain path of astray), the name of a mountain path and called it Shi'b al-Huda (Mountain path of guidance). Furthermore, Muhammad changed the name Banu az-Zinyah (children of fornication) and called them Banu ar-Rushdah (children of those who are on the right path), and Banu Mughwiyah (children of a woman who allures and goes astray) was changed to Banu Rushdah (children of a woman who is on the right path).[255] Perhaps a good example of how Prophet Muhammad laid significance in names is found in the following incidence:

> . . . the Messenger of Allah (i.e. Muhammad) asked about a milk camel about to be milked, "Who milks this camel?" A man stood up. The Messenger of Allah said, "What is your name?" The man said, "Murra (Bitterness)." The Messenger of Allah said to him, "Sit down." Then he said, "Who milks this one?" A man stood up and the Messenger of Allah said, "What is your name?" He said, "Harb (War)." The Messenger of Allah said, "Sit down." Then he said, "Who milks this camel?" A man stood up and the Messenger of Allah said to him, "What is your name?" The man said, "Yaish (He lives)." The Messenger of Allah said to him, "Milk!"[256]

I personally schooled with a guy named 'Shida' a Swahili word which literally means 'Problem'. No one doubts that such a name is psychologically problematic. Oh . . . and my desk mate was 'Taabu', another Swahili name for 'Distress'. Imagine walking with Shida and Taabu! In Kenya, you can easily hear names such as 'Mateso' (Suffering), 'Sura Mbaya' (Ugly Face), 'Matata' (Turmoil), 'Jirongo' (A Great Liar), 'Mtoro' (Absentee), 'Lewa' (Get drunk), 'Masumbuko' (Harrassment), 'Zogo' (Chaos), 'Matumbo' (Guts/Intestines), 'Majimbo' (Regionalism), 'Mashaka' (Tragedies), 'Mambo' (Things), 'Kombo' (Crooked), 'Mwanakombo' (Crooked Junior), 'Bomoa' (Destroyer) . . . What if they try to live up to such names? People's fates might be determined by their names just as the old proverb says: "A person with a bad name is already half hanged". At least my name is Salim Boss. That means I don't share names with Phyllis Sophical, Walter Melon, Phil Down, Buck N. Bronco, Phillip Hipps, Long Vu, Chris Cross and Ken U. Diggit. I think I survived the name-related terror attacks because my mother rescued me by naming me 'Boss'. Almost everyone calls me Salim

251. Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 209; Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, Bk. 213.

252. Muslim Bk. 25, No. 5332.

253. Al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah 11/335.

254. Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 225; Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 224.

255. For more references on the change of names by Prophet Muhammad see Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 211; Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 212; Muslim Bk. 25, No. 5334; Abu Dawud Bk. 36, No. 4938; Abu Dawud Bk. 14, No. 3224; Abu Dawud Bk. 36, No. 4932; Abu Dawud Bk. 36, No. 4936; Abu Dawud Bk. 36, No. 4937.

256. Muwatta Bk. 54, No. 24

Boss. Otherwise, I too would have been a victim of bad names thanks to my mother. Had I been named Nuclear or Antimatter! I pray I grow up to be a peacefully humble Boss (probably Boss of the believers). The name Salim comes from *Islam* which means both "peace" and "submission/surrender" i.e. Islam is the peace that comes from submission to God's will, a definition compatible with Dante's line: "In His will, our peace."

And if we were to share the advice given by the Prophet of Islam, we would just quote him saying: "On the Day of Resurrection you will be called by your names and by your father's names, so give yourselves good names."[257] Now, imagine on the Day of Judgment a caller announces, "Liar Lucifer Burns, come this side!" Or they call Rogue Rebel Diezel to proceed to hell. Maybe, they will also call Crue Jahannam Pride and his three friends Crapp Sin Debris, Hard Way Smokey and Wrath McViolence Savage to receive their verdicts!

Am even told that in China, you will meet people named 'Yang Wei' (Unable to Become Erect), 'Yang Juan' (Filthy Pig Sty), 'Liu Jing Ye' (Torrent of Sperm). What's wrong with humanity? I was also told that there is someone called Harakisha Kunamoto! (in Kiswahili it means "rush there is fire"). He that is ambitious for his kid should not inflict on him/her names such as Spade, Bush, Dick, Clitoria, Colon, Rice, Gizzard, Buster, Corn, Laughland, Timberland, Pink, Butt, Latrina, Damit, Tibet, Nut, Gunn, Strock, Hysteria, Hogg, Crash or Nameless. Parents should stop traumatizing their kids with names such as Stigma, Bone, Lucifer, Cheese, Fifty Cents, Placenta, Moonblood, Bank-In-Mars, Bank-In-Moon, Diezel-Blaze and the sort.

When you tolerate weird names, you will have weird people doing weird things. Ecclesiastes chapter seven verse one says: "A good name is better than precious ointment . . . ." Some parents should have mercy on their kids and discontinue naming them things like Barb B. Cue, Rusty Nail, Ding Dong, Si Yoo, Kornfield, Flash Gordon, Dick Van Dyke, Holly Wood and Just Houlding. It's our expectation that parents will learn the art of naming so that, in future, we wouldn't have to go through traumatic experience hearing names such as Burns Rose Bush, Rocky Stone, Hap Hazard, Ash Tray, Sue Case, Ho Stabber, Will Fall, May Dye, Soon Gonna Die, Pansy Pipe Undertaker, Robin Banks, Bystander Dracula, Hye Voltage, Burning Meteorite, Dick Finder, Cut Off, Angry Wolf ,Pearl Harbor, Scarface Zombie, Coral Reef, Stone Face, Razor Burns, Tyranny Buller, Ransom Fox Fart, Temper Harass Junior, Enough Is Enough and Sandy Bottoms among others. Lets hope you will not come to meet Terry Wrist, Hart Breaker, Dee Compose, Colin Ambulance, Aleksander Livshits, and Maroon Dick.

However, for the love of Islam, some reverts prefer to change their names so as to be identified as Muslims. There is absolutely no harm in that for if your label shows your intent, wear it. Thus, your name would strengthen your identity as a Muslim and become the flag bearer for this beautiful religion. In *Silent no more: confronting America's false images of Islam*, Paul Findley sees the power of identity and advised that:

> . . . . Muslims should identify themselves publicly with Islam and seek ways to present the truth about their faith to non-Muslims . . . . Muslims can display their religious affiliation modestly . . . .

257. Abu Dawud Bk. 36, No. 4930; Musnad Ahmad 5/194, its isnaad (Chain of narration) is declared Hasan (good) by Imaam an-Nawawi and Ibn al-Qayyim.

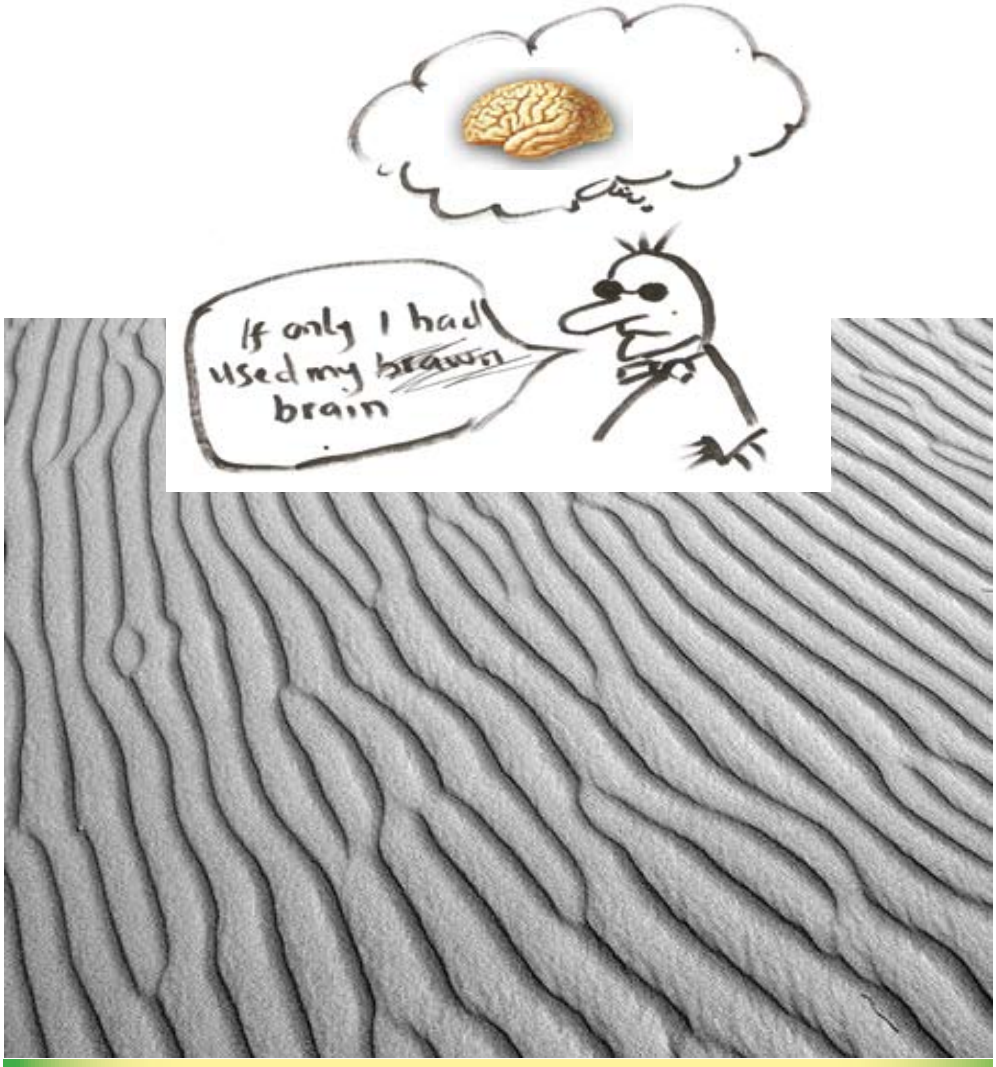
> [As a result of this display] their own good behavior and worthy accomplishments will be identified with Islam."[258]

Changing ones name should not be a big deal. According to the Bible, God Himself changed Abram's name declaring: "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations." [Genesis 17:5]. Also, in biblical scripture, Jacob's name was changed after God said to him: ". . . your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name . . . ." [Genesis 35:10] In addition, Sarai (meaning contentious one) was changed to Sarah (meaning princess), and Saul was changed to Paul. I am still wondering why Jesus would change Simon BarJona's name to Rock! [Matthew 16:17 -18; John 1:42].

258. Findley, Paul. Silent No More: Confronting America's False Images of Islam. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001. pp. 282 – 284.

PART 4

HAD WE USED OUR INTELLIGENCE



The desert waves. Quite similar to the brain folds. The Qur'an persisently instructs mankind to use the brain. Like in Qur'an Chapter 67 verse 10, we are told that those who will be condemned to hellfire will say, "... Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we would not have been among the dwellers of the blazing Fire!"

"The difference between intelligence and education is this: intelligence will make you a good living."

~ Charles F. Kettering

The Audacity to be Ignorant

When life is preoccupied with American Idol, African Idol, Asian Idol, Indian Idol, Australian Idol, Eskimo Idol . . . ; when precious moments are spent watching talk shows, from Tyra, to Oprah Winfrey Show to Late Night with Conan O'Brien to Jerry Springer . . . ; when alarms are set to remind the beginning of 'Apprentice', 'the Big Brother' and 'So You Think You Can Dance'; When Premier leagues, World cup, Olympics and village tournaments become our priorities - with loyal fans curious to know the lifestyle of their soccer stars, yet thoroughly ignorant of Jesus favorite hairstyle; when people decide to commit suicide because their team has lost; when movie series are seriously followed – some if not many have watched 'Prison Break', with multiple seasons that seems to end when the world ends; and the soap operas, aired on TV for our life's span duration - 'The Bold and the Beautiful', 'The Young and the restless', 'Days of our Lives', 'One Life to Live', 'As the World Turns', 'Passions' and there are other widely watched telecasts such as 'Lost', 'OC', 'To Be or Not to Be', 'Desperate Housewives' and 'Men Behaving Badly'; when human beings voluntarily contest in extremely degrading stunts like eating cockroaches while others at home entertainingly watch the fear factor; as if that is not sufficient, people resort to laughter's through comedies and they watch things like 'White Chicks', 'The Man Who Knew Too Little', 'The Girl Next Door', 'Get Smart', 'King of Comedy', 'Steve Harvey' 'Just For Laughs' not forgetting 'Mr. Bean.' After all, they claim, life is a sea of gut-busting, cheeks-hurting, pants-peeing fun. When real people become a nuisance they watch Walt Disney. And when theaters are full while Hollywood/Bollywood release more record-holding, top-grossing box-office blockbusters . . . . and after watching the movie, they become compelled to write a review about it, reveal the goofs for the movie or to atleast discuss it with friends and relatives!

When tranquility doesn't descend until we know the world's most expensive bra; when we are curious to know the person who spent the longest time keeping the eyeballs protruded; when we find the latest *Guinness World Records* to see if Pingping, the shortest living man (74.61 cm) who was measured in Hohhot, China still holds the record; when people search for the person who would spend the fastest time to pop 1, 000 balloons; and when people compete in making the tallest stack of doughnuts while industries compete in making the largest toilet roll.

When "The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the more serious things). Until ye visit the graves." [Q 102:1-2], I mean when you are preoccupied with accumulating wealth with no signs of being fatigued by too much wealth. And because ". . .violent is he (man) in his love of wealth" [Q 100: 8] you will frequently hear middle-class millionaire dreaming to reach billionaire status while the billionaires aspiring to be 'crazy wealthy.' This reminds me of Roberts Frost's saying: "By working faithfully 8 hours a day, you may get to be a boss and work 12 hours a day." ; when people's important life goal is to be rich and famous yet

they are unaware of how they jeopardize their lives for they don't seem to know that ". . . it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." [Matthew 19: 24]; when spare time is not spent on Words of God but on *Think and Grow Rich*, *Rich Dad Poor Dad*, *How to Make Money*, *365 Habits of Romantic Persons*, *Million Dollar Habit*, *How To Win Friends and Influence People*, *The Secret*, *Cooking Made Easy*, *Act Like a Lady Think Like a Man*, *Guess How Much I Love You*, *Sex for Dummies* and *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. . . . ; and when the short time we have for reading God's scriptures we don't do study-reading (i.e. reading for the purpose of understanding, learning and remembering). One wonders: is reading the Bible/Qur'an without reflecting synonymous to eating without digesting?; when "The post-industrial world produces virtually everything except answers to the most essential questions about life and existence: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?"[259] Indeed, "They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they, of the Hereafter, are unaware." [Q 30:7]

When people ardently search for a Step-by-Step Tutorial on how to French-kiss. And others go to Google to type "I'm bored" while rejoicing that they are not alone for they have already been preceded with others who typed "I'm *so* bored!" This phenomenon is likely to invite brilliant sociologists to initiate a study titled, "bored people are actually stupid because they seem not to know the purpose of life." Many will encounter a jaw hanging experience when they hear that there are some people who still think that we are created to get bored! When music is used to ease boredom with geniuses inventing holidays - Mother's Day, Anniversaries, Get-Together Party, Birth-Day (BD) while condemning Death-Day (DD), and religious holidays celebrated irreligiously; when we voluntarily enter into cookie-baking contest and eating competitions; and when the neighborhood organize a water gargling contest; when we spend too much time playing mindless phone and computer games; when one decides to become depressed, bored with life or just because they have nothing to love than to sleep, and decide to waste lots of precious time on excessive sleeping. How I wish they knew that multiple studies have found that people who sleep nine or more hours a night have significantly higher death rates than people sleeping seven to eight hours a night; when Research Institutes research on how to eat as much as we can without getting fat; when we are amassed in knowing whos-dated-who and when burgeoning populations join the International Association of Gossipers while others cross the boundary of reason claiming that the function of language is gossip; when the 'lets-go-shopping' culture becomes predominant; when our minds become fictitious because of reading too many fictions - *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *Romance* . . . .

When people run out of ideas and decide to do the following: Blow up a paper bag and burst it behind a friend; make facial expressions in a mirror; check their waist measurement; peel an orange; convince someone that an African elephant has smaller ears than an Asian elephant; imagine coming to work by elephant; try to figure out if the "black box" flight recorder is never damaged during a plane crash, why isn't the whole airplane made out of that stuff!; jump on their chair and shout "cockroach" to frighten their colleagues; photocopy your hand; run around the office as though someone were chasing you or march around the office like a Roman soldier; imagine how sorry everyone will be when you are dead; make a list of the ten people you would

259. Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.p. 89.

arrest immediately if you became a dictator; practice rubbing your tummy and rubbing your head at the same time (and am sure some are just practicing it now); rehearse your excuses for when you are caught in an embarrassing situation; pretend you're a robot or pretend to be a car; wondering whether a fly without wings should be called a walk; try to figure out what will happen if an ambulance on its way to save someone runs over someone else, does it stop to help him or proceed to the next victim; try hard to explain why people point to their wrist when asking for the time, but they don't point to their crotch when they ask for the bathroom; check your answers for yesterday's crossword puzzle; ask your grandpa what grandma was like when she was young; email your boss the message: I know what you did last vacation; boil ice cream; honk and wave to strangers; imagine how you would interview your boss for your job; imagine what you will do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant! . . . .

When fashion industry and cosmetic companies receive unprecedented queue of customers. Have they really reflected on the proverb: "Many complain of their looks, but none of their brains?"; when a person wears a T-shirt imprinted: "I want fun. Now", who is bypassed by another with a "Whatever you see I owe to Spaghetti" T-shirt imprint. Then as you wonder why would God create such people, behold you encounter a dare-not-look-at-me type of a lady walking towards your direction, her shirt inscribed: "WARNING: I have an attitude. . ." while struggling to peep at the remaining text, you realize it's written ". . . and I know how to use it!" And before the sun sets, you encounter another fellow wearing a T-shirt bearing the words: "Whatever the question is, Liquor is the Answer." Maybe such a heedless person would have been endowed with a much more meaningful descent life ". . . but he (man) clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire." [Q 7:176]

When we get glued to our computer screens surfing pornographic material and sending emails to females while males receive torrents of emails from females; when people enter into yahoo groups to seek visitors with similar tastes and hobbies such as collecting stamps, blackjack, underwater modeling, chasing one's shadow, washing fish, bull fighting, dog-sledding and chicken wrestling; when we embark on an extensive search in *facebook* so as to find that primary school classmate who peed in class; when funny and weird videos are the most watched clips in YouTube; when people post totally shocking, wacky, incredibly ignorant questions on community-driven question-and-answer websites. Bizarre questions such as: Where does jam come from; is it possible to cook a potato in a washing machine; do fish get thirsty; who killed the Dead Sea; how much milk is there in the Milky Way; what is the speed of dark; why is a carrot more orange than an orange; what happens when you swallow your pride; if the president were gay, would his husband be the first man; if swimming is good for your shape, then why do the whales look like the way they do; if a picture is worth a thousand words, what is a picture of a thousand words worth; if a shop opens 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, why are there locks on the doors; why do we call them restrooms when no one goes there to rest; if someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation? And crazy enough, the sites give members the chance to earn points as a way to encourage them to answer the silly questions? when life is spent aimlessly is when we become fully ignorant. Ignorant of our purpose of life. An extremely smart guy would ask, "Is this really what we were created for? "Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?" [Deuteronomy 32:6]. And if the Bible is not a source of inspiration to you, then reflect on the words of Henry David Thoreau: "It is not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is, 'What are

we busy about?" I know that according to article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "Everyone has the right to rest and leisure . . ." but if per article one of the Declaration, human beings are "endowed with reason and conscience" then we would expect a smart creature to ask: what is the ratio between entertainment industry and worship industry? The Intelligent seeks to compute the ratio between wealth accumulating rituals and rituals for attaining the Kingdom of Heaven. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." [Mathew 6:33]

Purpose Of Life

"If tomorrow is judgment day
And I'm standing on the front line
And the Lord asks me what I did with my life
I will say, I spent it with you"
~Whitney Houston, "My Love Is Your Love" Lyrics

"Only barbarians are not curious about where they come from, how they came to be where they are, where they appear to be going, whether they wish to go there, and if so, why, and if not, why not." So said Isaiah Berlin. It is an act of prided ignorance not to bother about the purpose of life. How ignorant are those who think life is about hanging out with friends, making babies plus making money. And to enjoy oneself then die. That's all. Or do they think life is to eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. If Nokia was made by Nokia Manufacturing Company for a specific purpose – for communication - and it comes with a manual, it is only ignorant people who assume God created them for no purpose and without a manual. If the Nokia phone dies, or gets out of supply, the Nokia Company can easily remanufacture the same phone. Smart guys know that the One who created man is able to bring him back after his death. "And it is He (God) who begins creation; then He repeats it (i.e. repeat the creation), and that is [even] easier for Him." [Q 30:27. Also see Q 86:8]. Immanuel Kant, the German writer and philosopher (1724-1804,) foresees a greater drama-packed Judgment Day as he says:

> The drama of this life is not complete; there must be a second scene to it, for we see the tyrant and his victims without seeing justice being executed. We see the conqueror and the subjugated, without the latter finding any revenge. Therefore, there must be another world, where justice will be carried out.[260]

Research In Motion (RIM), is a Canadian wireless device company that is credited for developing blackberry smartphone. Imagine watching an interview in which the CEO of RIM has just been asked the question, "why did you invent blackberry?" I am 100 % confident that whatever response given by the CEO, it won't include such answers like "I don't know" or "there is no specific intention for manufacturing such a device, but we are still figuring out what made us develop blackberry." If that is the case, why do the simpletons keep on saying that God created man for no purpose?

260. Al-Qarni, Aaidh ibn Abdullah. Don't be Sad. 2nd ed. Riyadh, International Islamic Publishing House, 2005. P.143.

Whether it's made in Japan, made in China, or made in Kenya, the fact is that we are surrounded by things humans have made with their own hands. The intelligent would ask: Why did man make those things? To the uncomprehending fools, the answer is "pass/ I don't know" while the extremely smart will say man made things to perform some specific function for us. By illustration he/she will mention that we make houses to serve as a shelter, cup to serve us tea, blow drier for glorifying our hair. Others make weird-looking gadgets to serve them emotionally and otherwise. If we make things to serve us, the brilliant will know that God made us to . . . .

It is the habit of the ignomorus to worship other than the *One* God. "Say, [O Muhammad], "Is it other than Allah that you order me to worship, O ignorant ones?" And it was already revealed to you and to those before you that if you should associate [anything] with Allah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers. Rather, worship [only] Allah and be among the grateful." [Q 39:64 -66]. Will Moses be provoked to anger when he comes to our modern-day worshipping places and see the varieties of idols? What will Moses say to modern-day worshipers of Idols? God narrates how the Israelites were saved from Pharaoh but along the road, they started to exhibit ignorance. "And We (God) took the Children of Israel (with safety) across the sea; then they came upon a people intent in devotion to [some] idols of theirs. They [the Children of Israel] said, "O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods." He said, "Indeed, you are a people behaving ignorantly. Indeed, those [worshippers] – destroyed is that in which they are [engaged], and worthless is whatever they were doing." [Q 7: 138-139]. The Arab idolaters had 360 Gods, in Hinduism they have 330 million Gods, the Christians have three, 'covalently' bonded as one! (Even though simple mathematics tell us that if you place one apple next to two apples it sums up as three apples!). This leads us to wonder, ". . . are many different lords (gods) better or Allâh, the One, the Irresistible?" [Q 12:39]. I am tempted to borrow some few lines from, *"Through the Looking Glass"* by Lewis Carroll:

> "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

Now, when Jesus was asked which was the first commandment of all, he answered, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." [Mark 12: 29]. Is it possible that, by choosing the word "one", Jesus never meant just one but more than one? Suppose Jesus really meant three, why didn't he bother to interpret it so clearly lest others be confused. After all, Jesus is so good in parables in that he can just give an analogy of the egg and say, "God is three in one just like the yolk, the white and the shell are three parts of the same egg." Jesus can also say, "Don't you think of water! It can exist as liquid, solid, and gas. Confused are those who don't imagine the three parts of the apple: the skin, the meat, the core, for all the three parts makes one apple!" On a serious note, how can a good teacher like Jesus refuse to elucidate the Trinity doctrine? Jesus taught us how to pray, what to do to enter the kingdom of Heaven, how to . . . I mean he taught his disciples many things but why on earth didn't he teach the nature of God? Or maybe he taught the concept of Trinity in secrecy! But this contradicts his principle of transparency: "Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and *in secret I have said nothing.*" [John 18:20]

Indeed, many are unaware and will even be shocked of the existence of the following statement in *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

> Neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema (The Judaic profession of Monotheism) in the Old Testament: "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4). The earliest Christians, however, had to cope with the implications of the coming of Jesus Christ and of the presumed presence and power of God among them . . . .[261]

Let us analyze what Tom Harpur concludes about Christianity and Trinity. By the way, Tom Harpur is Canada's renowned spiritual author, journalist, and TV host who is also listed in U.S. Who's Who in Religion, Canadian Who's Who, and the most recent edition of Men of Achievement, (Cambridge, England). It was said of him that: "If Harpur's research and reasoning was the stuff of which sermons were made . . . churches wouldn't be empty." In his best-selling book, *For Christ's Sake*, Harpur writes:

> What is most embarrassing for the church is the difficulty of proving any of these statements of dogma from the New Testament documents. You simply cannot find the doctrine of the Trinity set out anywhere in the Bible. St. Paul has the highest view of Jesus' role and person, but nowhere does he call him God. Nor does Jesus himself anywhere explicitly claim to be the second person in the Trinity, wholly equal to his heavenly Father. As a pious Jew, he would have been shocked and offended by such an Idea. Over the last decade or so, I have talked as long and as frequently as possible about these particular doctrines with intelligent lay people and clergy of all denominations , and I have found widespread confusion – in itself bad enough. But there is worse to come. This research has lead me to believe that the great majority of regular churchgoers are, for all practical purposes, tritheists. That is, *they profess to believe in one God, but in reality they worship three* . . . .[262]

According to a 2002 survey conducted in Britain by Christian Research, a quarter of Anglican priests stated that they did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity.[263] And according to Pastor G. Reckart and David Olsen, "The Trinity Doctrine is one of greatest lies in the world today. Its roots can be clearly traced back to Babylonian mysticism, the teachings of nimrod, even into Jewish kabbalism itself!"[264]

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261. The New Encyclopedia Britannica. Vol. II. 15th ed. 2002. p 928. And according to the Dictionary of the Bible: "The Trinity of God is defined by the Church as the belief that in God are three persons who subsist in one nature. The belief as so defined was reached only in the 4th and 5th centuries AD and hence is not explicitly and formally a biblical belief." [See McKenzie, J.L Dictionary of the Bible. 1995. p. 899]. For more evidences on the falsity of Trinity please see: The Encyclopedia Americana.1956. Vol. XXVII, p. 294L; Legasse, P. The Columbia Encyclopedia. 2000. p. 2885; The New Catholic Encyclopedia. 1967. Vol. XIV. p. 295 & 299; Hastings, J. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. 1951. Vol. XII. p. 458; Henderson, I. Encyclopedia International. 1969. p. 226; Douglas, J.D. The New Bible Dictionary. 1962. p. 1298; Brown, Colin. New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. 1932. Vol. 2 p. 84; Metzger, B.M & Coogan, M.D. The Oxford Companion to the Bible. 1993.p.782.

262. Harpur, Tom. For Christ's Sake. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986. p.7.

263. Petre, Jonathan. "One third of clergy do not believe in the Resurrection."Daily Telegraph 31 July 2002.

264. Pastor G. Reckart & David Olsen. "Examining the Trinity: Unmasking the Roots of the Trinity Doctrine." apostolics.net <http://www.apostolics.net/notrinity.html> Last retrieved 25 April. 2009.

Jesus once talked to a woman saying, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father. . . ." [John 4:21] and he did not include the Son and the Holy Spirit. In John 4:23 Jesus said ". . .the hour is coming, and is now here, when the *true worshipers* will worship *the Father* in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him." Sincerely speaking, these verses show that worship must *only* be directed to what they call the Father and neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit. Even after reading Isaiah 45:14:"God is with you alone, and there is no other; there is no god besides him" still some think there is one God surrounded by two other Gods! I mean even after reading verse number 18 of the same chapter where God clears the confusion by saying "I am the Lord, and *there is no other*." Still some think there are two more others? This must be a mathematical miracle.

Those who fear ignorance more than they fear death and those who don't lack the most common of senses would wonder, "If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! but glory to Allah, the Lord of the Throne: (High is He) above what they attribute to Him!" [Q 21:22] and ". . . (if there had been many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have tried to overcome others! Glorified be Allâh above all that they attribute to Him!" [Q 23:91] "They have no knowledge—those who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save." [Isaiah 45:20]. What do you think will happen if you are caught by your jealous wife, kissing another woman? And assuming that this short-tempered, easily-pissed wife of yours is carrying a gun! And people don't even care when the Bible states: "for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, is a jealous God" [Exodus 34:14] According to the book of Hosea, the reason why Israel was destroyed is because the people of Israel had started worshipping Baal, a god of the Canaanites. "Going after other gods, for Hosea, is like a woman going after other lovers, leaving her husband behind."[265] If that is the case, then what will be the fate of Christians who, in the analysis of Tom Harpur, ". . . profess to believe in one God, but in reality they worship three. . . ."? And you may want to imagine what a husband would do if he discovers that his wife is having a love-affair with two other men!

Others claim that God-son (Jesus) died! There is a bigger fear than terrorism, a greater danger than global warming in that anyone with a strong intellectual capacity would declare that the world is at peril shall the other Gods (God-Father and The Holy Spirit) decide to commit suicide. If a God-Son can decide to die, why can't the rest hang themselves? Such "God's" can do anything. Ignorance kills and knowledge saves lives. Muslims say it is outside the parameters of 'Godship' to do un-Godly things. God can do anything save absurdities (like God becoming a man or God dying or God splitting Himself into three Gods, or God begetting a son without a wife, or God creating a stone heavy for him to lift!). The way we can't say *Brother John* gave birth to baby girl the same it is illogical to say God became a man or died. To say that God became a man or has splitted Himself into three is as saying God is not really God. Prophet Muhammad taught Muslims whenever they leave their houses to supplicate to God saying: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from misleading or being misled or oppressing or being oppressed or from being ignorant or bearing the result of

265. Ehrman, Bart D. God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question—Why We Suffer. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2008.p.44.

ignorance"[266] Woe to those who don't seek refuge from ignorance.

In a 1999 article of the *Daily Express* which predicted the leading trends which would be visible in the new millennium, A.N. Wilson, the best-selling biographer of Jesus, acknowledges the simplicity of Islamic creeds (including the strict monotheism of the Muslim God), devoid of incomprehensible mythologies. Such simplicity would be responsible of attracting many to Islam:

> Islam is a moral and intellectual acknowledgement of the lordship of God without the encumbrance of Christian mythological baggage in which almost no one really believes. That is why Christianity will decline in the next millennium, and the religious hunger of the human heart will be answered by the Crescent, not the Cross.[267]

Abraham was a friend of God and at no time did the friend of God acknowledge 'three-in-one' Deity. Abraham worshipped one God. If we want to imitate the behavior of the winners such as Abraham, then we should shun Trinity Doctrine and we would surely become friends of God. Okey. I think any human being reading this book should have known the purpose of life.* To avoid taking things for granted, I will let William Ellery Channing, an American moralist, clergyman and author (1780-1842) tell us the purpose of life. He summons:

> We do, then, with all earnestness, though without reproaching our brethren, protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity. "To us," as to the Apostle and the primitive Christians, "there is one God, even the Father." With Jesus, we worship the Father, as the only living and true God. We are astonished, that any man can read the New Testament, and avoid the conviction, that the Father alone is God.[268]

Even Satan was reminded by Jesus about the purpose of life: "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him *only* you shall serve."[Matthew 4:10]. If we fast-forward to the Day of Resurrection, we would still find Jesus reiterating the purpose of life. The Qur'an brings that episode:

> And [beware the Day, i.e. the Day of Resurrection] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?' "He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You commanded me – to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness. If You should punish them – indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them – indeed it is You who is the

266. Tirmidhi 3427 and was authenticated by Sheikh Albany in Tirmidhi 2725 and in Ibn Maajah 3774.

267. Wilson, A.N. "The Dying Mythology of Christ." Daily Express 21 Nov. 1999. Also see Wilson, A.N. "The Poisoned Chalice." Guardian 25 Nov. 2000.
* For those who want more convincing arguments on our purpose of life are kindly invited to read a short article entitled the "The Big Questions." written by Dr. Laurence B. Brown, MD. The article is freely available in many internet sites. For easy access, just visit Dr. Brown's website: <www.leveltruth.org> and go to articles section to pick the "The Big Questions" article.

268. "Unitarian Christianity" Sermon given by William Ellery Channing. It was delivered at the Ordination of Rev. Jared Sparks in The First Independent Church of Baltimore on 5 May 1819. See, <http://www.channingmc.org/channingspeech.html>

Exalted in Might, the Wise. [Q 5:116-118]

In simple terms, worship means *abiding by the do's and don'ts of God.* Worship can as well be defined as obedience to God by following that which He ordered in His scripture and upon the tongues or example of His Messengers. Maybe a good definition of worship is in the Biblical verse, "For the love of God is this, that *we obey his commandments.* And his commandments are not burdensome" [I John 5:3] Ibn Taymiyah, a great scholar defines worship as "a comprehensive term covering everything that God loves and is pleased with – whether sayings or actions, outward or inward."[269] In this line, Muslims believe that even making love to your wife is an act of Worship because such an act pleases God.[270] In contrary, to have sex with other than your wife is not an act of worship. Also working in the way God desires (i.e by not engaging in interest, bribery, cheating e.t.c.) is worship. Being kind to your parents is worship because God instructs you to ". . . be dutiful to your parents. . . ." [Q 17:23]

We should remember that when God says "do this" then that thing has numerous benefits to man and when He says "don't do this" it's because the prohibited thing is harmful to man. For example, God says don't take alcohol. Why? Because ". . . their sin is greater than their benefit. . . ." [Q2:219] and if its benefit isn't outweighed by its harm why would they mandate health warning in alcohol ads. When we read the command of Allah, "Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine. . . ." [Q 5:3] we may want to ask: Did Allah prohibit pork because it contains large amounts of cholesterol and lipids thus responsible for obesity, hypertension and heart attack?; or the prohibition was due to the fact that pig is known to harbour parasites as well as bacteria and viruses . . . that means pigs are a breeding ground for influenza and habours parasites like Taenia solium, Trichinella, Taenia Trichuriasis?; or did Allah outlaw pork because pig consumes its own excrement even if it is bred in very clean and hygienic conditions?; or maybe because of its anatomy for the pig cannot be slaughtered at the neck because it does not have a neck? Muslim scholars assert that God's commandments entail something good He wants us to acquire or something bad He wants us to stay away from.

What was my point? Oh yes, I wanted to say that worship is a broad concept which encompasses almost all activities of man. In Islam, worship is not restricted only to mosques, fasting the month of Ramadhan, hajj, charity, sacrifices, e.t.c. To smile can as well be worship. And when we say the purpose of life is to worship God, it doesn't mean that we should abstain from the pleasures of the world. God Himself says in the Qur'an ". . . and forget not your portion of *legal enjoyment* in this world . . . ." [Q28:77] He also said "So eat of the lawful and *good food* which Allāh has provided for you. . . ." [Q 16:114] Muslims have the conviction that Muhammad is number one worshipper on earth. However, it is interesting to note that the best of worshippers (i.e. Muhammad) also said "What I like (most) of your world is three things: *women, perfume* and prayer, which is the dearest thing to my eye."[271]

269. See Majmoo'ul-Fataawaa 10/149.

270. Muslim Bk. 5, No. 2198.

271. Al-Nasa'i and Ahmad

Why Would God Forsake Us?

". . . for His (God's) mercy endures forever."

[Psalm 136:1]

This one sentence is repeated 26 times in the 26 verses of Psalm 136. What a miracle!

The Nokia Manufacturing Company would not manufacture a phone without supplementing it with a Manual. Just recently, I had bought a new Nokia Phone, a 1203 Nokia Model. It came with a User Guide (manual) detailing important information on how to use the device. In the General Information corner of the manual, it read:

> Check www.nokia.com/support or your local Nokia Web site for the latest version of this guide, additional information, downloads, and services related to your Nokia product. On the website, you can get information on the use of Nokia products and services. If you need to contact customer service, check the list of local Nokia contact centers at www.nokia.com/customerservice. For maintenance services, check your nearest Nokia service center at www.nokia.com/ repair.[272]

Now that is what I call caring for the customers. The Manual went further to provide a diversity of resources for helping customers to properly use the phone. On page 6 of the Manual, it warned: "Read these simple guidelines. Not following them may be dangerous or illegal. Read the complete user guide for further information." And we hear shameless people wanting us to believe that God is a "don't carer" because He didn't provide us with simple guidelines on how to use the planet earth in the most efficient way. It is only those who prefer to die than endure the pain of thinking, who assumes God created them without a manual. Some consider thinking is the greatest torture, some believe thinking is the hardest work on earth and others have the conviction that if you think hard, you will die, and some are made to believe that if they think, they will go to hell, hence very few people take the risk of thinking.

God made the sun to provide light during the day and at night the moon reflects the Suns' light assisting us to fight waves of darkness. And the stars had been useful for navigation. God gifted creatures with perfect systems best suited for their conditions and needs thus you hear that migrating birds can navigate, even on overcast days, by light polarization. The pit viper (a type of snake) uses a natural infrared sensor to sense warm-blooded animals. Animals give off different heat signatures. The pit viper senses body heat from animals and gives the snake a 'picture' of that animal. This helps the snake to find prey in the dark and defend itself against intruders, even in complete darkness. Sharks possess what is called passive electroreception; they sense electric fields hence they can identify obstacles, potential prey, or even a mate. Using such sensory system, the sharks can even locate living fish under the sand. Bees use the earth's magnetic field for comb building and navigation. Bats and dolphins "see" with sonar. Whales migrate by "reading" the Earth's magnetic fields. The mentally-handicapped and those who take little or no pleasure from thinking would have the right to say animals were endowed with a perfect and systematic program of survival while man was totally neglected. "And they did not appraise Allah with true appraisal when they said, "Allah did not reveal to a human being anything." [Q 6:91]

272. Nokia 1202/1203 User Guide in English. 9211638/ Issue 2, 2008.p.9.

Imagine if we would try to count all the favors of God on mankind! I doubt if there is someone capable of counting them. Those demanding ignorance think God has bestowed us with infinite favors save the favor of a Life-Manual. Among the blessings is that:

> . . . the grazing livestock He (God) has created for you; in them is warmth and [numerous] benefits, and from them you eat. And for you in them is [the enjoyment of] beauty when you bring them in [for the evening] and when you send them out [to pasture]. And they carry your loads to a land you could not have reached except with difficulty to yourselves. Indeed, your Lord is Kind and Merciful. And [He created] the horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and [as] adornment. And He creates that which you do not know . . . It is He who sends down rain from the sky; from it is drink and from it is foliage in which you pasture [animals]. He causes to grow for you thereby the crops, olives, palm trees, grapevines, and from all the fruits. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give thought. And He has subjected for you the night and day and the sun and moon, and the stars are subjected by His command. Indeed in that are signs for a *people who reason*. And [He has subjected] whatever He multiplied for you on the earth of varying colors. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who remember. And it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat and to extract from it ornaments which you wear. And you see the ships plowing through it, and [He subjected it] that you may seek of His bounty; and perhaps you will be grateful. And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift with you, and [made] rivers and roads, that you may be guided. And landmarks. And by the stars they are [also] guided . . . And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. [Q 16:5-18]

All these God does for His creation. All the innumerable favors which God bestows man, all these favors . . . I mean, in all the immeasurable favors, God did not include the favor of a revelation/divine book/blueprint whereby man can know how to live according to God's wish. More grippingly, loving parents guide their children by providing good education, good health, protect them against harm and so forth. Sometimes your mother will provide you with some recommendations such as: It's going to rain, don't forget to carry your umbrella! Carry a jacket, its really cold out there! Early to bed early to rise makes a man healthy wealthy and wise! Wash your hands before you eat! For strong and healthy teeth, brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste! Son, carrots are good for your eyes! Don't eat too much candy dear! I don't want to see you walking with those thugs! e.t.c. No one doubts that such do's and don'ts have a lot of benefits. I am wondering that our mothers (just human beings with limited knowledge) could give us such useful recommendations while our good and loving God (the All-knower of what harms and benefits mankind) decided not to list some tips of smart living on the surface of earth. I beg to differ.

At the time of Prophet Muhammad, there was a woman who was frantically searching for her baby in a crowd. Naturally, mothers have overwhelming feelings of love, tenderness and mercy for their babies. So when she finally found the baby, she took it in her arms, cradled it next to her chest and suckled it. Then the Prophet asked his disciples, "Do you think that this lady can throw her son in the fire?" Of course our fast and furious reply would be "hell no!" and similarly the disciples responded by saying that the woman would never do such a thing. The Prophet then said, "Allah is more merciful to His slaves (i.e. human beings) than this lady to her son."[273] In Psalm 23 God

273. Bukhari Vol.8, Bk.73, No.28. Also see Muslim, Bk. 37, No. 6635.

is described as a "shepherd" who cares for His sheep but which kind of a shepherd is this, one may ask, who does not provide a map/manual/textbook/scripture which would lead people to the right path?

Those who are not deprived the right to think will know that God can never condemn us to Hell without revealing to us what it takes to be a candidate of Hell. What is the point of the government establishing prisons if they don't set to its people what is lawful and what is unlawful. It would be accusing God of *felony criminal neglect* if he will let us suffer on earth and later be cast in tormenting Hell Fire because He *fails* to give us perfect guidance on the most important aspect of life which is *how to worship God*. It is really funny that everything has been figured out, except how to live! Men who employ just a modicum of commonsense will agree for sure that God must have given us a perfect and systematic guidance of worshipping him.

There is the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* yet we are selfish not to give the Creator of the Universe a chance to make some few Declarations of Rights. We are living in a world of rules and regulations. Every game has a rule; you've also heard safety rules, rules of grammer, rule of law, rule of the land, rules of engagement (ROE), military rule, library rules, rule of court, rule of thumb, rule of force e.t.c. but intellectual dwarfs launch protestations when God frames His rules. When invited to someone's house, you will struggle to conform to the standards and rules of that home. The while-in-Rome-do-as-Romans-do principle otherwise don't go to Rome. But stupidity of man is manifested when he is invited in a home called planet earth, he does not respect the Owner and His rules, and to make things worse, man decides to establish his own rules (Way of life/Laws/Policy/Religion/Ideology). "Do they then seek the judgement of (the Days of) Ignorance? And who is better in judgement than Allâh for a people who have firm Faith." [Q 5:50] And to escape from reality, man pretends that God did not reveal a certain code of behavior. Almost every country has a constitution. Some marvel at the ingenuity of this man-made document as in the example of a British prime minister, William Gladstone describing the US constitution as ". . . the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."[274] When you open the American Constitution, the first thing you will come across is the following statement:

> We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.[275]

Someone might inquire: "Did your God ever ordain any document that is meant to establish Justice, insure domestic and international Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to people?" Again, am still troubled at hearing that God did not establish a constitution for mankind.

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274. The Constitution of the United States of America, Analysis and Interpretation. Preface. By Alexander Willey. Washington D.C.,: United States Government printing Office, 1953.

275. The Constitution of the United States of America, Analysis and Interpretation. Washington D.C.,: United States Government printing Office, 1953. p.19.

We are told that, "When Allah completed the creation, He wrote in His Book which is with Him on His Throne, "My Mercy overpowers My Anger."[276] Moreover, Psalm 136 goes with repetitive message that ". . . His mercy *endures* forever", but why would God abandon us on this planet without supplementing us with a systematic way/formula of living? According to the Qur'an, after Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they were expelled to earth, but God in his mercy promised them that He will send them a Manual from which the dwellers of earth will get guidance. Addressing them, God said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise] – all, [your descendants] being enemies to one another. And if there should come to you guidance (i.e. manual/revelation/scripture) from Me – then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer. And whoever turns away from My remembrance (revelation) – indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life. . . ." [Q 20:123-124] So we see that through God's enduring mercy, man is given a Life-Manual but because of man's ignorance of the existence of the manual, his life becomes enveloped with difficulties. Those who assumed God didn't lay down a systematic code of living didn't utilize their huge frontal lobes to come up with a better idea. Behind wrong living is wrong thinking and just like operating any garget without a manual (or using a wrong manual) is distressful, similarly living without a God-given manual is stressful.

We know man should have a divine guidance either in the form of a Prophet or a Scripture, but what about those generations that lived prior the Torah, Gospels and Qur'an? The answer is very simple. God's knowledge of the past outmatches the knowledge of all world historians and record keepers. The Qur'an describes God in the following format: "Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills . . . ."[Q 2:255] That is a God who knew the number of all galaxies even before man came up with the Hubble Telescope. And as you haven't imagined, ". . . with Him (i.e. God) are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darknesses of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record." [Q 6:59] As we browse through the verses of the Qur'an, the following message pops up: ". . . No fruit comes out of its sheath, nor does a female conceive (within her womb), nor brings forth (young), except by His (i.e. God's) Knowledge." [Q 41:47] So it means that God even knows the birthdays and deathdays of all the 6 billion people on earth! "And not absent from your Lord is any [part] of an atom's weight within the earth or within the heaven or [anything] smaller than that or greater but that it is in a clear register (i.e. God knows it)." [Q 10:61] So Allah knows the word count of this book! And what if I say I have a secret that is confined in my heart and I haven't confided it to anyone, would you say that Allah knows of it? "It is the same (to God)" Qur'an Chapter 13 verse 10 states, "whether any of you conceal his speech or declare it openly, whether he be hid by night or go forth freely by day (Allah knows all that)." In fact, even a mystified pregnant woman heading to hospital for an ultrasound check may get a miscarriage when she astonishingly discovers that "Allah knows what every female bears, and by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or exceed." [Q 13:8] He is a God who knows the weight of every mountain, a God who knows the exact number of litres of waters present in our oceans, a God who knows the exact number of raindrops when it rains. A God who

276. Bukhari Vol.4, Bk. 54, No. 416. Also see Muslim Bk. 37, No. 6628.

knows all the leaves of plants and trees, a God who knows the precise number of people sleeping at this minute on this planet and the number of people who will wake up after exactly one hour from now. When we read the verse "And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. . . ." [Q 11:6] does it mean that God knows the room I slept in last night? You should also know that God even knows that right now, right there, you are reading this book! So you mean "Allah is the All-Knower of everything." [Q 64:11]. That's my point.

Now, when such a God says ". . . We certainly sent into every nation a messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allâh (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Tâghût (i.e. all false deities)...." [Q 16:36], no clever person should dispute. Even Muhammad was not fully aware of past history of divine guidance. God taught Muhammad saying, "And We (i.e God) have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those [whose stories] We have related to you, and among them are those [whose stories] We have not related to you." [Q 40:78]. So not only is God aware of the fact that every nation had a messenger preaching the true religion, but also there is a ". . . Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when Allah will resurrect them (i.e. mankind) all together and inform them of what they did. Allah has kept account of it, while they have forgotten it. And Allah is Witness over all things." [Q 58:6] Because God is Just and ". . . His mercy endures forever." [Psalm 136:1], every people/generation was given a manual on how to worship God. But because of the injustice of man, he doesn't want to know whether God sent divine guidance and even if he acknowledges the existence of the Guidance, he doesn't care its do's and don'ts.

Right Revelation

"The difference between the almost-right word & the right word is really a large matter—it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning."

~ Mark Twain, Letter to George Bainton

Just as the best manual to operate the Nokia phone should be made by the Nokia Company and not ShoeLace Company similarly the best manual for man should be from the Creator of Man. It is common knowledge that God communicates through revelation sent to His chosen Messengers. From God's Scriptures is where man gets all the answers to the dilemmas of life.

The person who uses his intelligence will undoubtedly affirm that man is naturally greedy and selfish. In his book, *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes described man as cruel, greedy, and selfish, and if not caged, they would fight, rob, and trouble each other.[277] An intelligent person knows that man can do anything to serve his personal interests. Man is a potential anything. Man is a potential truthful person, man is also a potential liar. Anyone can be anything. That man you respect and trust could one day be a thief, a liar, corrupt, rapist . . . . Immanuel Kant, the German writer and philosopher echoes the same thoughts by saying: "Man must be disciplined, for he is by nature raw and wild." Therefore, a smart person knows that God's scripture can be a victim of man's corruption. Like any other valuable commodity, scripture can be counterfeited. Unless there is divine intervention, man can corrupt the Holy Scripture for reasons best known to this

277. Hobbes, Thomas. Leviathan. 1651.

greedy man. At least we evidently know few bad men who have the audacity to corrupt a country's constitution for their vested interests. Placing your salvation on the wrong scripture is like leaning a ladder against the wrong wall, the steps you take, slowly but surely, gets you to hell.

I sometimes feel like crying when I go to a bank and see the teller passing the money given through a Bank Note Detector. Because the same person would go to Church and be given a book called the Bible and without passing it through an authenticity detector, he/she blindly believes it to be a genuine word of God! Sometimes I believe people will go to hell because of double standards. You work hard at work, but you don't want to work hard in religion. You don't accept money till you verify its authenticity but you accept scriptures without verification. The way we have genuine and fake notes, we also have genuine word of God and fake scriptures. But the ignorant thinks that religious scriptures can't be forged by professional counterfeiters such as Satan and his allies. "Do not consider it proof just because it is written in books" Maimonides cautioned long time ago, "for a liar who will deceive with his tongue will not hesitate to do the same with his pen."

The one who uses his brains will investigate the scriptures at his reach to verify if the scripture is free from fabrications inserted by corrupt men. How would someone be given a scripture and without careful scrutiny he completely believes in it. The world is a den of evil men. Maybe the righteous are outnumbered by men of evil. Eleven centuries before Thomas Hobbes* told us that "man was cruel, greedy, and selfish", the Qur'an had already declared: "And truly, most of men are rebellious and disobedient." [Q 5:48] Maybe the scripture you are reading is in fact a man's masterpiece and not God's revelation. The halfwit are those who are unaware that man is capable of committing the greatest vices as well as the greatest virtues. The smartest don't accept any scripture without scrutiny. How wonderful are these words of wisdom echoed by Buddha:

> Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. *But after observation and analysis*, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.

Bart D. Ehrman, a leading scholar of the Bible cogently suggests not to even accept the ilk of the preceding quote without rational evaluation:

> In my opinion, people need to use their intelligence to evaluate what they find to be true and untrue in the Bible. This is how we need to live life generally. Everything we hear and see we need to evaluate—whether the inspiring writings of the Bible *or the inspiring writings of Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, or George Eliot, of Ghandi, Desmond Tutu, or the Dalai Lama.*[278]

* Thomas Hobbes died in 1679 A.D. By the time Muhammad died in 632 A.D. the Qur'an had been fully revealed.

278. Ehrman, Bart D. Jesus, Interrupted. Kindle Edition. HarperCollins e-books, 2009.p.281-282

We have blindly accepted the scriptures as unchallenged authority without verifying whether the authority is indeed unchallenged or not. “If a word in the dictionary were misspelled, how would we know?” so said Steven Wright. Right as he was, I take the pleasure to paraphrase that and say, “If a word in the Bible/Qur’an were concocted, how would we know?”

At least the Qur’an doesn’t shield its readers from rational inquiry by mandating people to have the Holy Spirit for them to study it. The Qur’an, without bashfulness, invites men and Jinn to examine and analyze it and probably that is because truth fears no questions. The Qur’an claims to be the word of God and asks mankind to prove it wrong. I am sure you agree that no one is listening until you make a mistake. Now imagine a situation where your college lecturer announces: “In this semester you will never hear any mistake as I lecture, mistakes in facts, grammar, even a mispronunciation . . . notify me if you spot one!” Going with human trend, we should not be surprised to see the students coming in for the lectures with an extra notebook written on it “Mistakes in Lecturer’s Speech” Anyone knowing that “human is to err” would not be confident to emerge successfully in such bold challenges. Let me add another example. If at the end of his answer sheet, a student writes: “This answer is perfect. There are no mistakes in it. Find one if you can!” Do you think the teacher marking that paper would take it lightly. No way, he will not sleep until he finds a mistake. He will try to find even a slight mistake such as a spelling mistake. Qur’an challenges men saying, “Do they not consider the Qur´an (with care)? Had it been from other Than Allah, they would surely have found therein Much discrepancy.” [Q 4:82]. In other words the Qur’an says if you think that it’s not a God’s revelation; find any faults (discrepancies) in it! To paraphrase that, it would be something similar to, “this Qur’an is a perfect word of God and you will not find even a single mistake in it, prove me wrong by finding any faults (be it contradictions, scientific errors, grammatical errors, false prophesies, linguistic deficiencies, whatever . . . .” The Qur’an has presented itself clean and transparent. Now, with the Bible’s case, are we going to examine it objectively’? Billy Hughes was not objective when he said “when having my portrait painted I don’t want justice, I want mercy.” However, for us to know whether the Bible is the Right Revelation, we should analyze it with the lens of justice not mercy. Truth be told, if we examine the Bible unblinkingly we will agree that love may be blind but Faith has 20/20 vision. For those who would want to rephrase the preceding Qur’anic verse in the context of the Bible, I think it would read something like this: “Do they not consider the Bible (with care)? Had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein Much discrepancy.” I challenge anyone who claims the Bible to be an inerrant word of God to go to the nearby bookshop and buy Bart Ehrman book *Jesus, Interrupted*. If absence of discrepancy in scripture is a hallmark of divine revelation, then by the time you finish reading *Jesus, Interrupted*, you will certainly agree that the Bible is not an inerrant word of God.

Muslims acknowledge that the Bible is a mixture of both the true word of God and man’ s corrupted insertions and hence they disdain the Bible because they are extremely cautious of half truths, they don’t want to risk getting hold of the wrong half. And since it is twice as hard to crush a half-truth as a whole lie, the propensity of distancing away from the Bible increases even further. Moreover, Muslims will argue that since the central purpose of life is to worship God, then there is an uncompromising need of using an error-free,100% accurate manual of worshipping God. No one doubts that in the Bible, mankind can extract amazing advise and information but if we go with Thomas Fuller’s adage: “Good is not good where better is expected”, Muslims will evidently show that the Qur’an is a 100% pure, unadultered word of God, and that it should be followed by

anyone who has a habit of making smart choices. Let us not be like those men who when in love with a woman's dimple, they make the mistake of marrying the whole girl but let us only admire the good part of the Bible and refrain from the ugliest segments. "I had started seminary as a born-again fundamentalist," the Bible scholar Bart Ehrman says, "by the time I graduated (i.e. with master's of divinity Degree) I was moving toward a liberal form of evangelical Christianity, one that still saw the Bible as conveying important teachings of God to his people, but also as a book filled with human perspectives and mistakes."[279] This is the intellectual honesty which is fraught and applaudable in Qur'anic text.

Blind Faith

"By doubting we come to inquiry; and through inquiry we perceive truth."

~ Peter Abelard (1079 -1142). He was a French philosopher and theologian.

"Most institutions demand unqualified faith; but the institution of science makes skepticism a virtue."

~ Robert King Merton (1910 – 2003). He was a distinguished American sociologist, one of the first sociologists elected to the National Academy of Sciences and the first American sociologist to be elected a foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. He was the first sociologist to be awarded the US National Medal of Science. Some of his books are *Social Theory and Social Structure*, *On Theoretical Sociology*, and *On the Shoulders of Giants: The Post-Italianate Edition.*

Some, if not most, of our habits (religious or otherwise) have been acquired from someone else. Not excluding culinary habits such as eating a full plate of rice with chopsticks, or slicing a sausage with a fork. Even, in times of horror/excitement, exclaiming, "Jesus" or "Allahu-Akbar" is a habit copied from someone else. In other words, we wouldn't do what we do if someone else hadn't done them. You are what you copy and others copy not only from human beings but also from animals, insects, jinns and the devil. You have also copied, "so what!"

Were Pope Benedict XVI born in Makkah, he would probably be facing the Kaabah (the black cubed-shaped building in Makkah) praying while reciting Qur'an from memory. Non-Muslims are not allowed to enter Makkah or Madinah hence any Makkan/Medinan is by default born and raised Muslim. Had Osama Bin Laden been the son of George Bush senior, he would probably be a born-again Protestant Christian busy forming coalitions to fight terror. Mark Twain summarizes what I am trying to say in these words: "In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination." Therefore, one step to solve the puzzle of many religions is to objectively study these inherited religions. Those who preserve, protect and defend ignorance say ". . . we found our fathers following a certain religion, and we will certainly follow in their footsteps." [Q43: 23]. In another Qur'anic verse, we are urged to ponder on the stupidity-scale of these fathers we inherit from: "And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers

279. Ehrman, Bart D. Jesus, Interrupted. Kindle Edition. HarperCollins e-books, 2009.p.16

doing." Even though *their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?"* [Q2:170]. We should really investigate our religions before accepting them. Those who refuse to exercise their brains choose to just have a blind faith. Mary Pettibone Poole (from *A Glass Eye at a Keyhole*, 1938) states: "To repeat what others have said, requires education; to challenge it, requires *brains*." And the Chinese have a proverb that says: "A wise man makes his own decisions, an ignorant man follows the public opinion." Therefore, it becomes a commendable act to pass our religions through a rationality filter before accepting them.

Despite being told that, "Truth stands out clear from Error" [Q 2:256], and despite the encouragement to "Test all things; hold fast what is good" [I Thessalonians 5:21] and not forgetting Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together. . ." and William Adam reminding us that, "faith is continuation of reason." Even with, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but *test* the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world." [1 John 4:1] Despite being given the instruction of wisdom by Solomon: "The simple believe everything, but the clever consider their steps." [Proverbs 14:15] Even after being told by Elbert Hubbard that "the recipe for perpetual ignorance" is to ". . . be satisfied with your opinions and content with your knowledge." Despite God's announcement: "My servants, all of you are liable to err except one whom I guide on the right path, so seek right guidance from Me so that I should direct you to the right path."[280] And despite being shown in Psalms 25:4-5 how to pray for guidance: "Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long." Despite the maxim of "search, and you will find" [Matthew 7:7] and the promise that ". . . everyone who searches finds . . . ." [Matthew 7:8]. What's more, Charles E. Garman couldn't be left behind but unleashed his advice: "Reason inspired by love of truth is the only eye with which man can see the spiritual heavens above us." Despite being advised by Dr. Laurence Brown that "sincere seekers need a blanket of evidence to warm their convictions."[281] Despite all these tips, we still adhere to blind faith. Are those who are smart equal to those who are ignorant? "It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition."[Q 39:9] Moreover, God is asking mankind to seek him, giving the promise that He shall answer them: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." [2 Chronicles 7:14]. Extrapolating from this verse, I see that we are supposed to:

1) Humble ourselves before God
2) Pray to God to show us the true religion
3) Use our faculties to seek for the true religion
4) Turn from our wicked ways and just embrace God's True religion

We should never be confused by the words of Desmond Tutu: "When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said "Let us pray." We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land." Any brilliant person would figure out that the scripture is the basis of most, if not all religions. Hindus derive their creeds from Vedas, Christians from the Bible, Muslims from the Qur'an, and adherents of Capitalism /Democracy

280. Muslim Bk. 32, No. 6246.
281. Brown, Laurence B. God'ed: The Case for Islam as the Completion of Revelation. USA: BookSurge Publishing, 2007. p.17.

from the 'We the People.' That is why, for Christians, the best reference for Jesus is not *The Washington Post*, *Hello Magazine*, *Cosmopolitan*, *National Geographic*, *Guinness Book of Records* nor the encyclopedias but the Bible or more precisely the New Testament. Hence no amazement is encountered to hear Paul Scott stating, "Arguably, apart from the Gospel the church has little to offer the world." The Muslims say the best reference is the Qur'an. But have we bothered to examine these scriptures handed over to us by the light-skinned people (Jews, Greeks, Arabs). "The key to wisdom is this -- constant and frequent questioning . . . for by doubting we are led to question and by questioning we arrive at the truth." Maybe Peter Abelard's intelligence was at work when he was uttering such a witty statement. Taking the Scriptures blindly is not a matter of faith, it is a crime against the brain and an insult to Faith. Why do you have the brain if you don't use it here? Will Rogers would console me by saying: "You can't legislate intelligence and common sense into people."

We should admire the audacity of the doubting Thomas who couldn't succumb to authority blindly but, like a scientist; he went further to verify the resurrection by feeling Jesus' hands for the imprint of the nails. Jesus did not discourage objective analysis of events but facilitated: "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." [John 20:27]. If rooting out the problem is the best way of solving our problems, then can't we reach the Bible/Qur'an and objectively examine it? If you are well-read in the Bible, you will be familiar with Jesus' statement: "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did" [John 8:39]. But we fail to recognize that among the many things Abraham *did not do* was to wear a cross, pray while kneeling, believe in Trinity, worship in churches, blindly follow his father's religion. . . . All the three renowned religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) revere and emulate Abraham, the friend of God. But the dilemmas which appear irresolvable are: Was Abraham a Jew, Christian or Muslim? Are the religions we blindly inherited from our parents the same religion practiced by the friend of God, Abraham? The part of the problem is solved by the Qur'anic verse: "And who turns away from the religion of Abraham except him who *befools* himself?" [Q2:130]. The other part of the solution, I strongly believe, has to do with the brain.

Using the Brain to Examine a Scripture/Religion

"God has given us more than fourteen billion cells and connections in our brain. Why would God give us such a complex organ system unless He expects us to use it?"

~ Ben Carson

He is the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Children's Center. He is a Professor of Neurological Surgery, Oncology, Plastic Surgery and Pediatrics. He is also the author of *Take The Risk* (2008), *The Big Picture* (2000), *Think Big* (1996) and *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story* (1990). He has received numerous honors and awards including over 40 honorary doctorate degrees.

French country bread

It is shaped a little like a loaf of French country bread, but the brain has been called the most complex object in the universe. Your brain consists of about 100 billion neurons*[282], ". . . the same order of magnitude as the number of stars in the Milky Way"[283] and which is about 16.6 times the number of people on Earth. The Oxford University biologist Professor Richard Hawkins said on man's brain: ". . . if you unraveled a man's brain cells and placed them end to end, there would be enough to go around the world 25 times"[284] These hundreds of billions of cells of the brain are interlinked through trillions of connections. Humans continue to make new neurons throughout life in response to mental activity. Every time you recall a memory or have a new thought, you are creating a new connection in your brain so why do people fear mental exercise. There are no pain receptors in your brain, meaning your brain can feel no pain yet people don't want to risk thinking. Your brain uses 20% of the total oxygen in your body.[285] There are about 100,000 miles of blood vessels in the brain of which if they were stretched out they would circle the earth more than four times.

The composition of the brain is approximately 75 % water and we have been raised up knowing that water is life. "The average adult brain weighs about 1400g . . . ."[286] hence the human brain is 2% of total body weight (compared to 0.15% of an elephant's brain), meaning humans have the largest brain to body size. And others argue over the "big brain-big ideas" assumption or rather 'the bigger the brain the greater the cognitive capacity' presumption! To further see the uniqueness of our brain, you will be amazed to learn that human beings have the largest and most complex cerebral cortex in the animal kingdom making them qualitatively different from other animals at

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*A neuron is the principal functional unit of the nervous system, specialized for the receipt, processing and transmission of information. See Crossman, A.R. and D. Neary. Neuroanatomy. 2nd ed. Edinburg: Harcourt Publishers Limited, 2000.p 35.

282. Guyton, Arthur C. Textbook of Medical Physiology. 8th ed. India: Prism Books Limited, 1991.p.478.

283. Scientific American Sept. 1992.

284. Seymour, R. Ian. Maximize Your Potential. Nigerian Edition. BeninCity: Joint Heirs Publications Nigeria, Ltd., 2002. p. 70.

285. Ganong, William F. Review of Medical Physiology. 22nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2005. p.617.

286. Ganong, William F. Review of Medical Physiology. 22nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2005. p.617.

the level of mental functioning. The cerebral cortex is the layer of the brain often referred to as gray matter and is responsible for mental functionings. In his book, *Are We Unique,* James Trefil, a Robinson Professor of Physics at George Mason University, author of more than thirty books, and a science commentator for National Public Radio states:

> What distinguishes the human brain is not the existence of the cortex, but its size and organization. If the human cerebral cortex were flattened out, it would be about the size and shape of a large cloth dinner napkin. Our nearest relative, the chimpanzee, has a smaller cortex—something a little bigger than a page of this book.[287]

Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth should memorize the fact that what makes humans different from other animals is the human brain. Exactly what James Trefil voiced: ". . . whatever it is that separates us from the other animals has to do with the functionings of our brain. In that three-pound mass enclosed in the bones of our skull lies the secret to human uniqueness."[288]

Our minds are still boggled at the thought of the speed of the information that can be processed by the brain. It has been estimated that neurons can send signals to thousands of other cells at a rate of about 200 miles per hour.[289] Ralph C. Merkle, researcher on molecular nanotechnology and cryonics writes, "It seems reasonable to conclude that the human brain has a "raw" computational power between 10^{13} and 10^{16} "operations" per second."[290] Amazingly, the brain never stops developing and changing since embryonic times, till death. Trefil says the same thing: "Your brain never stops developing and changing. It's been doing it from the time you were an embryo, and will keep on doing it all your life. And this ability, perhaps, represents its greatest strength."[291] According to *Brain Facts* by The Society for Neuroscience, "Neuroscientists believe that the brain can remain relatively healthy and fully functioning as it ages . . . ."[292] After a study on intelligence of various age groups, Dr. K. Warner Schaie concluded that ". . . the decline in mental performance in many community-dwelling older people is probably due to disuse and is consequently reversible."[293] Despite being told that the more we think, the better our brains function – regardless of age, why then, do people refuse to maximize the full potential of this unique organ?

While awake, your brain generates between 10 and 23 watts of power or enough energy to power a light bulb. "The brain works ceaselessly, even when you are sleeping, and it consumes prodigious amounts of energy."[294] Even though it is 2% of your total body weight, your brain is the most

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287. Trefil, James. Are We Unique?: A Scientist Explores the Unparalleled Intelligence of the Human Mind. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997. p. 20.

288. Trefil, James. Are We Unique?: A Scientist Explores the Unparalleled Intelligence of the Human Mind. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997. p. 43.

289. Guttman, Monika. "The Aging Brain." USC Health Magazine Spring 2001.

290. Merkle, Ralph C. "Energy Limits to the Computational Power of the Human Brain." Foresight Update 1 Aug. 1989. No. 6. <http://www.foresight.org/updates/Update06/Update06.1.html#anchor171085>

291. Trefil, James. Are We Unique?: A Scientist Explores the Unparalleled Intelligence of the Human Mind. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997. p. 78.

292. The Society for Neuroscience. Brain Facts: A Primer on the Brain and Nervous System. Washington, DC: The Society for Neuroscience, 2008.p.34.

293. The Human Brain. The Franklin Institute Online. 2004. <http://www.fi.edu/learn/brain/exercise.html>

294. Alvin & Virginia, Sivestein. World of the Brain. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986. pp. 20-21.

energy-consuming part of your body because it uses 20% of your body's energy.

There has been a heart transplant, liver transplant, but there has never been a human brain transplant. We all know that reproductive organs (and other organs) are not endowed with maximum protection the way the brain is. The brain is best guarded in a protective skull and for enhanced security, the brain is further protected by three layers of membranes called the meninges (which comprise of the dura mater, arachnoid mater, and pia mater).[295] Some would easily argue that anything of great value should be under tight security. There are cells in your brain called astrocytes whose work is to look after your neurons, repair the CNS (Central Nervous System) tissue after injury or damage by disease. Such cells help keep the environment of your brain healthy.[296] Those not using the brain will see the futility of their brain being kept clean and healthy. The brain rules all of the body's organs, including the heart. When the body encounters a shortage of nutrients, it is the brain that is privileged with nutrients above other organs. You may underestimate the importance of the brain, but your body recognizes the significance of the brain in that when there is hypovolaemia (decrease in the volume of circulating blood), the blood is diverted away from other organs and directed only to the brain and the heart.[297] In just 10 seconds after the loss of blood supply to the brain, you lose consciousness.[298]

Incredibly, more electrical impulses are generated in one day by a single human brain than by all the telephones in the world. Those who are afraid of thinking will be caught in a bombshell to learn that the number of thoughts that is estimated the human brain produces on an average day is 70,000. It is also noted that the brain is capable of having more ideas than the number of atoms in the known universe. The computer would disappoint the user warning, "hard drive full" but that is not the case with the human brain. Humans have an unlimited capacity to learn. Michael J. Gelb, the author of the international best seller *How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci* and *Innovate Like Edison* says, "Research shows that you begin learning in the womb and go right on learning until the moment you pass on. Your brain has a capacity for learning that is virtually limitless, which makes every human a potential genius."

Because of the powerful nature of the brain and the scanty information about the brain, people in every age and time, have tried using their latest technology as a model for trying to understand it. Ancient Greeks thought the brain functions like a catapult, Gottfried Leibniz compared it to a mill, other people compared the brain as a water clock while others as a telephone switchboard, some thought that the brain worked like a telegraph system, Sigmund Freud often compared the brain to hydraulic and electro-magnetic systems, and contemporarily some compare it with the computer. Did you know that many groundbreaking developments have been made by brain, and not brawn? As a matter of fact there are some great achievements that can only be made possible by the brain and which computers may not be able to duplicate. Can your PC paint the monalisa portrait, or can it, on its own, write the equivalent of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, or can it imagine? After all, the metaphor of the brain as a computer is false in that the human brain is not

295. Crossman, A.R. and D. Neary. Neuroanatomy. 2nd ed. Edinburg: Harcourt Publishers Limited, 2000.p.11 & p.49.

296. Young, Barbara and John W. Heath. Wheater's Functional Histology. 4th ed. Edinburg: Elsevier Science Limited, 2002.p.134.

297. Ganong, William F. Review of Medical Physiology. 22nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2005. p.637.

298. Ganong, William F. Review of Medical Physiology. 22nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2005. p.619.

much like a computer. There is no "off" for the brain - even when you are sleeping, your brain is still active and working whereas when the power to your computer is turned off, signals are not transmitted. You will acknowledge and marvel at the awesomeness of your brain once the British neurophysicist W. Grey Walter declares that, "At least ten billion electronic cells would be needed to build a facsimile of a man's brain. These cells would occupy about a million and a half cubic feet, and several additional millions of cubic feet would be needed for the 'nerves' or wiring. The power to operate it would be around a billion watts."[299]

A discovery of this century is that the brain, unlike a computer, is a moldable organ which rewires itself all the time (neuroplasticity).[300] Rewiring in the human brain occurs when the brain is stimulated and when we remain passive far less rewiring occurs. It appears that brain plasticity and metacognition are closely entwined. The brain is reshaping itself constantly in response to the intellectual activity going on. Learning to perform new and challenging activities can help keep the brain fit, thanks to the ability of the brain to rewire itself.[301] And I believe that challenges like reading scriptures and attempting to discover the true religion is in the interests of the brain. The overthrown dogma was that the brain is hardwired, fixed in form and function therefore an older person is less inclined to learn new things. But with the discovery of neuroplasticity, the aging adults who feared their brains will fade had to put the fear at rest.

In *The World of the Brain*, it is stated that: " If we could learn how to utilize more of the brain's capacity, or even to expand that capacity, the discoveries that would follow would transform our world into a healthier, more comfortable, and more stimulating place."[302] Moreover, the human brain has a vast storage capacity in that it can hold information of 1000 supercomputers. The potential brain capacity is estimated as at least equivalent to that of 25 million volumes, a 500-mile-long bookshelf![303] In the words of Ben Carson, "No computer on earth can come close to the capacity of the average human brain. This brain that we all have is a tremendous gift from God -- the most complex organ system in the entire universe. Your brain can take in two million bytes of information per second."[304]

Thus, even Isaac Asimov concludes that "The human brain, then, is the most complicated organization of matter that we know."[305] And Keith Black, chief of neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles and who performs about 250 brain surgeries a year stated that, "If you look at the anatomy, the structure, the function, there's nothing in the universe that's more beautiful, that's more complex, than the human brain."[306] Susan Blackmore, a lecturer in psychology at the University of the West of England states:

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299. Seymour, R. Ian. Maximize Your Potential. Nigerian Edition. BeninCity: Joint Heirs Publications Nigeria, Ltd., 2002. p.70.

300. "How The Brain Rewires Itself." Time 19 Jan. 2007. For more about brain rewiring see a book titled "The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Science." by Norman Doidge.

301. A Jom. "Neuroplasticity: How to Achieve a Brighter Brain." 3 Dec. 2007. healthmad.com. <http://www.healthmad.com/Senior-Health/Neuroplasticity-How-to-Achieve-a-Brighter-Brain.63961>

302. Alvin & Virginia, Sivestein. World of the Brain. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986.p. 2.

303. DeYoung, Donald B. "Thinking about the Brain." icr.org. < http://www.icr.org/article/thinking-about-brain/>

304. Carson, Benjamin. The Big Picture. Nairobi: International Bible Society, 2002. p.50.

305. Hooper, J. and D. Teresi. Foreword. The Three-Pound Universe. Macmillan,1986.

306. Schreiber, Le Anne. "Determined to enter the brain in a friendly way." Discover April 2004.

> In proportion to our body mass, our brain is three times as large as that of our nearest relatives. This huge organ is dangerous and painful to give birth to, expensive to build and, in a resting human, uses about 20 per cent of the body's energy even though it is just 2 per cent of the body's weight. There must be some reason for all this evolutionary expense.*[307]

Hippocrates, the Greek physician, mathematician and the Western father of medicine has also voiced the significance of using the brain when he made the following statement: "Men ought to know that from the brain, and from the brain only, arise our pleasures, joy, laughter and jests, as well as our sorrows, pains, griefs, and tears." Others see it's better to have weak kidneys, lungs, or other organs than having a weak brain. And Pasko T. Rakic, highlighting how unique we are from other species, say: "The brain is the organ that sets us apart from any other species. It is not the strength of our muscles or of our bones that makes us different, it is our brain."[308] And funny enough, the word "brain" appears 66 times in the plays of William Shakespeare.*

Now, if man is punished for not using such a powerful organ; the brain, then who is to blame? Man uses other organs for his survival. He maximizes the utility of his sexual organs for attaining sexual pleasures, he uses the organ eye to see even the microscopic things, the tongue is utilized by man to utter thousands of bizarre combination of words including backbiting and gossiping but why doesn't he use his important organ, the brain to recognize the most important issue of life: the true religion? Of course man uses his brains but for other trivial things while ignoring to use the same brain to understand the purpose of life. This is no doubt a staggering display of ignorance. Are there better words than those of Edward Humphrey who quipped "true wisdom is to know what is best worth knowing, and to do what is best worth doing." Astonishingly, you may see someone scratching his head toiling to solve puzzles (math puzzles, crossword puzzles, sudoku puzzles, jigsaw puzzle, word puzzles e.t.c.) while he is totally unprepared to scratch his head to examine religious scriptures to solve the puzzle of the authentic scripture. Solving math puzzles

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*In this quote, there is an element of evolution theory and it is important to clarify that Darwin's Theory of Evolution is not a proven scientific fact. In the *Quandary of Evolution* Harun Yahya writes: "Scientific discoveries and evidence reveal one unalterable truth: Life did not emerge as the result of a chain of coincidences, as evolutionists claim. The truth revealed by science today is that everything was created according to a flawless plan." Those interested in facts and not hypothesis should read Harun Yahya's books on the Refutation of Darwinism which include: 1)*the Quandary of Evolution (encyclopedic) i & ii*; 2) *The Errors of the American National Academy of Sciences: A reply to the Book Science and Creationism*; 3) *The Collapse of the Theory of Evolution in 50 Steps*; 4) *Why Darwinism is Incompatible with the Qur'an*; 5) *The Error of the Evolution of Species*; 6) *The Perfect Design of the Universe is not by Chance*; 7) *The Evolution Deceit*; 8) *Darwinism Refuted*; 9) *The Dark Magic of Darwinism*; 10) *Confessions of Evolutionists*; 11) *Tell me about the Creation*; 12) *The Microbiological Collapse of Evolution*; 13) *The Collapse of Materialism*; 14) *The End of Materialism*; 15) *The Biggest Deception in the History of Biology: Darwinism*; 16) *The Collapse of the Theory of Evolution in 20 Questions*; 17) *The Collapse of the Theory of Evolution*; 18) *The Religion of Darwinism*; 19) *The Theory of Evolution*; and 20) *Evolutionary falsehoods*. The books are available from Harun Yahya's website www.harunyahya.com

307. Blakemore, Susan. "Meme, Myself, I." New Scientist 13 March 1999.

308. Great Issues for Medicine in the Twenty-First Century. Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sciences, vol. 882, p. 66, 1999.

*For more references on the complexity of the brain see, The Society for Neuroscience. Brain Facts: A Primer on the Brain and Nervous System. Washington, DC: The Society for Neuroscience, 2008. Trefil, James. Are We Unique?: A Scientist Explores the Unparalleled Intelligence of the Human Mind. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997; Ondigo, Yahya M.A. God's Blessings to Humanity: Part iii. Nairobi: Abu Aisha Stores, 2009; <http://www.brainsource.com/amazing%20brain.htm>; Sandra Aamodt, Sam Wang. "Ten amazing facts about your brain." The Times 28 March 2008; <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/facts.html>;Disabled world. "Human Brain Facts and Answers." disabled-world.com 19 Oct. 2008. <http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/brain-facts.shtml>;"100 Fascinating Facts You Never Knew About the Human Brain." nursingassistantcentral.com 2009. <http://www.nursingassistantcentral.com/blog/2008/100-fascinating-facts-you-never-knew-about-the-human-brain/>;Gillman, Steven. "Ten amazing Brain Facts." downthelane.net <http://www.downthelane.net/ten-brain-facts.php>

is good for the brain and solving religious puzzles is also good for the brain. What I condemn is priority disorder.

You also use your greatest helper; the brain, and not the Holy Spirit, to choose the best watermelon in a supermarket. It is a waste of human brainpower to *blindly* accept religions/scriptures. God gave you brains in order to use it, so use your brains to distinguish the true religion from the false ones. You can't get lost. Just utilize your faculties of mind. Because humans have an intuitive sense of right and wrong and since "Truth stands out clear from Error" [Q 2:256], I believe we can discover the true religion. Never have a blind faith, use the brain to challenge the credibility of your religion. Galileo Galilei was absolutely right when he said, "I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use." To show the magnitude of the crime of not using the brain, the Qur'an calls those who suspend reason as the worst of species. "Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who *do not use reason.*" [Q 8:22] The brain has made it possible for us to achieve the wonders of walking on the moon and if well used we will surely achieve the wonders of walking on the surface of the Kingdon of Heaven.

Remember, brain is the top organ situated in the head then follows the heart which is situated in the chest. Superiority is from top downwards hence ask anyone where is God and he will point in the sky and not down. "Allahu-Akbar" is what Muslims normally chant, a phrase that means "God is Great" and this is a conviction which is in harmony with their Qur'anic verse: "Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself *above the Throne.*" [Q7:54] No wonder Bart D. Ehrman will resonate with the conception that a God would probably be the ". . . one who was above all else, far beyond what we could imagine . . . ." On further contemplation, Bart Erhman, the Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina and a leading authority on the Bible adds, "as we gaze out into the evening sky and consider the billions of stars and the billions of galaxies. He (i.e. God) was above and beyond it all. . . ."[309] And you have also heard jargons like "upward mobility" and "downward mobility." The point I am trying to emphasize here is that superiority is from top downwards. Therefore, you should first use your brain (which is at the top) then secondly, you believe with the heart. We should doubt those who discover a 'true' religion through their hearts rather than their heads. Ben Carson, is the world-famous *brain* surgeon, who when he speaks on issues of the brain, attention should be provided and to raise your voice is utter disrespect to intelligentsia. He once said: "The human brain is the thing that makes you who you are". Those who are blessed with quickness of thought will unblinkingly face a Muslim and say, "your brain is the thing that makes you a Muslim". For the sake of justice, the same witted person will unblushingly confront a Christian and say, "Your brain is the thing that makes you a Christian". And since two divergent religions cannot both be true and since Jesus did not tolerate the luxury of neutrality [Mathew 12:30] but insisted on one way leading to heaven [John 14:6], we can safely conclude that either the Muslim or the Christian did not use the brain to search for the true religion. I therefore request you to undertake the most cerebral of tasks: to find out the true religion. To those who are motivated to re–examine their scriptures/religions in the supervision of the brain, I strongly recommend Laurence B. Brown's two books, *God'ed* and *MisGod'ed*.

309. Ehrman, Bart D. Jesus, Interrupted. Kindle Edition. HarperCollins e-books, 2009.p.277

"I Think Syndrome"

"But what human judgment outweighs the commandments of God on the scales of opinion? What "person of God" would ever say, "Well, yeah, God forbids it, but I think it's okay?"[310]

~ Dr. Laurence B. Brown, MD
Author of *The Eighth Scroll*, *MisGod'ed*, *God'ed*, and *Bearing True Witness*

You can't say, "I think the earth is square" when there is an *established* fact that the earth is spherical. You can't say "I think Switzerland and Swaziland are neighboring countries" when there is an easily reachable atlas indicating that Switzerland is located in Western Europe while Swaziland is in the African continent. You should not say, "I think Obama and Osama are twins because their names closely match." You can't say "I think it's ok to drink sulfuric acid because it looks like water" when you can get a litmus paper to conclusively determine whether the solution is acidic or not. Similarly, you can't say, "I think all religions are right, they worship the same God", "I think Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism e.t.c. represent differing paths to the same destination!", "I think the true religion is . . .", "I think the purpose of life is to eat, live and die", "I think when people die, they go to heaven . . . "e.t.c., when there is an authentic source to *factually* answer all these questions. Mere opinions which are not backed by scriptural evidences are unreliable. With opinions, you certainly have a right to be wrong but with facts, you don't have a right to be wrong. This resonates well with Thomas Sowell who said "reality is not optional."

The *true* word of God is enough to eliminate the "I think syndrome". The true scripture contains the words of God. And when God says, it is a fact not a hypothesis/assumption/possibility. God's Word is truth [Psalm 119:160; John 17:17] and God ". . . cannot lie . . ." [Titus 1:2]. All doubts are normally silenced in confidence of divine guidance. It is an act of total ignorance to pretend you are smarter than God. By disagreeing with what He informs you through His (authentic) scripture for He is All-Knowing. "Should He (i.e. God) not know,- He that created? and He is the One that understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them)." [Q 67:14.] The *authentic scripture* will factually answer what the true religion is? What is the purpose of life? What happens during and after death? Who will go to hell? How to live on earth? . . . and any other dilemma humans have. There is no room for thinking when the right answer is readily available. Ignorance in the absence of information may be excusable, but willful ignorance in the face of the *True* Word of God is a global disaster. Samuel Johnson said: "Knowledge is of two kinds. We know the subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information on it." Now, wanton display of ignorance is when we don't know the subject ourselves and we don't bother knowing where to find information on the subject. However, when one is pushed to make an opinion, he should know full well that it is *not* a fact. He should say "that's just my opinion," but he must always end with, "I could be wrong."

A semblance of success will be seen when we discard the unfounded opinions or attitudes vis-à-vis religion. As it is said, "Assumption is the mother of all screw-ups." Amazingly, the Muslim Holy book elucidate on people who are doomed by saying that ". . . most of them follow not except

310. Brown, Laurence B. MisGod'ed: A Roadmap of Guidance and Misguidance in the Abrahamic Religions. USA: BookSurge Publishing, 2007.pp. 275-276.

assumption. Indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all. Indeed, Allah is Knowing of what they do." [Q 10:36] And Prophet Muhammad said, ". . . there will remain *ignorant people* who, when consulted, will give verdicts according to *their opinions* whereby they will mislead others and go astray."[311] There is another story where some knowledge-deficient men gave an opinion which was to be followed by their sick fellow. As a result, the sick man died because by implementing the opinion suggested, it aggravated his sickness. On hearing this, Prophet Muhammad became very angry at these men who gave a wrong opinion. "Why didn't they ask (from an authentic source) when they were *ignorant,*"[312] the prophet said.

Not Embracing the True Religion after Discovery

"Proper diagnosis and medication mean nothing if the patient fails to swallow the pills on his night stand, on time - or at all." [313]

~ Murad Wilfried Hofmann

Once we unleash sense, reason, and intellect in the quest for the true religion, the answer would easily surface. Guatama Buddha totally agrees with me for he said, "three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth." The extremely ignorant person is the one who discovers the Truth and decides not to embrace it. Robert Pirsig puts it this way, "The truth knocks on the door and you say, go away, I'm looking for the truth, and so it goes away. Puzzling!" Once you discover the truth, you will be left with two choices, either to believe or be damned. God's punishment is meant for those who ignored the truth after it has reached them. There is no excuse. Winston Churchill once said that, "Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened." It is these ignorant people who deserve God's wrath. The Muslims have a verse that reads: "Whoever goes right, then he goes right only for the benefit of his ownself. And whoever goes astray, then he goes astray to his own loss. No one laden with burdens can bear another's burden. And *We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).*" [Q 17:15]. Those who say, "our problem is not perception. Our problem is implementation" and they make no effort to implement what needs to be implemented, they shall have themselves to blame when God's wrath descends upon them.

The unintelligent person is he who knows the true religion and decides not to embrace it. The Christian apologist Richard Sisson once said that "People do strange things when they are cornered by facts. When evidence cannot be denied, men who care nothing for the truth simply become illogical. Minds become *willfully ignorant* and emotions turn hostile." To avoid the ignorant label, men should burry their prejudices and surrender to facts. Samuel Butler, English novelist, essayist and critic, (1835-1902) states that, "The truest characters of ignorance are vanity, and pride and arrogance." The true religion is the only vehicle that will take you to heaven. If you discover the true religion and, out of pride or arrogance, you refuse to follow it, the automatic outcome will be Hellfire. "Is he who is cast into the Fire better or he who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection?"

311. Bukhari, Vol. 9, Bk. 92, No. 410.

312. Narrated by DaraQutny.

313. Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.p. 194.

[Q 41:40]. Those who have purchased ignorance for smartness are stubbornly denying the true religion.

Men who have enthroned ignorance are those who whenever they are exhorted towards embracing the true religion, despite the consciences knowing it's the truth, they themselves despise it. "And when it is said to them: "Believe as the people (followers of Muhammad) have believed," they say: "Shall we believe as the fools have believed?" Verily, they are the *fools*, but they know not." [Q 2:13]. A fool is the ignorant, simple-minded person who has little knowledge in areas of benefit and harm. When a kid tears or discards a 100 dollar note, we know he is simply not past the ignorant stage, but when a mature person discards a religion which brings most benefits and prevents much harm, he is a thoroughly ignorant person who should be arrested or taken to Guantanamo Bay prison without trial. An ignorant person is he who refuses to follow a religion offered to him by a low-status person. Even when your son tells you, "O my father! Verily! There has come to me of knowledge that which came not unto you. So follow me. I will guide you to a Straight Path." [Q 19:43]. The intelligent will humbly submit to the New Religion discovered by the son whereas adherents of Ignorantism say: "Do you forsake my gods, son? If you do not stop, I will kick your . . . Get the hell out of me."

Going Concern of Islam

"The Islamic religion will continue until the Hour (i.e. the Last Day) has been established . . . ."[314]

~ Muhammad, the Messenger of God.

In accounting, 'going concern' refers to a company's ability to continue functioning as a business entity. Now, if someone calls you to join this company, he is sure of its going concern for it has survived 1000 years since its establishment. There are no uncertainties which may cast significant doubt upon the company's ability to continue its operations. It gives unparallel benefits to the members. Everyone is flocking to it and analysts predict that it is likely to have a monopoly in near future. And above all, no sane person resigns from the company. "Then why don't you join us?" The concerned friend pleads with you. The smart investor would take the offer very seriously. This time it is a religion. Since the time of Prophet Muhammad, Islam has survived for 1443 years. It has 1.5 billion adherents. Westerners and many others are subscribing to Islam. Scholars are sure it will dominate all other religions. In fact about 50 years from now, Islam will surpass Christianity in number of adherents. Muslims are about 20% of the world's population while Christians, about 30%.[315] In a 1998 interview, Zbginiew Brzezinksi, Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor has his own figure for the population of Muslims: "Look at Islam in a rational manner and without demagoguery or emotion. It is the leading religion of the world with 1.5 billion followers."[316]

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314. Muslim Bk. 20, No. 4483. According to Muslim Book 20, No. 4482, Prophet Muhammad said, "This religion would continue to remain powerful and dominant until there have been twelve Caliphs." Also see Muslim Bk.20, No. 4480.

315. Leupp, Gary. "Challenging Ignorance on Islam: a Ten-Point Primer for Americans." Counterpunch 24 July 2002. <http://www.counterpunch.org/leupp0724.html>

316. Interview of Zbigniew Brzezinski Le Nouvel Observateur (France), 15-21 Jan. 1998. p. 76.

After embracing Islam, there are hardly any cases of the adherents becoming displeased with it nor do they renounce Islam. Apart from living a successful life on earth, other benefits transcending this planet is that its adherents will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Will you join them? "Be not ignorant of anything in a great matter or a small." [Ecclesiasticus 5:15]. Working on the principle that there's safety in numbers, as in the flocking of birds and shoaling of fish, men who fear taking risks would opt to join the multitude of Islam. This is because ". . . in the multitude of counselors there is safety." [Proverbs 11:14] Heraclius was a smart leader who probed the going concern of Islam when he questioned Abu Sufyan (then a non-Muslim) about Islam in the presence of Muhammad's disciples. His conclusion was as himself uttered: ". . . Then I asked you whether his (i.e. Muhammad's) followers were increasing or decreasing. You replied that they were *increasing*, and in fact this is the way of true faith, till it is complete in all respects."[317]

Religion Is Difficult

"You believe in God? So what? So does Satan. How are you different from him?"[318]

~ Dr. Laurence B. Brown, MD
Author of *The Eighth Scroll*, *MisGod'ed*, *God'ed*, and *Bearing True Witness*

". . . had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together." [Q 10:99] but life is a test, "In order that Allâh may distinguish the wicked (disbelievers, polytheists and doers of evil deeds) from the good (i.e. adherents of the true religion), and put the wicked one on another, heap them together and cast them into Hell. Those! it is they who are the losers." [Q 8:37] Any first-rating thinker will agree with the verse: "Verily! We have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them (mankind) as to which of them are best in deeds." [Q 18:7]. Many people are unaware that planet earth is an examination 'room' whereby ". . . the Lord your God is *testing* you, to know whether you indeed love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul." [Deuteronomy 13:3] So we should always know that, "Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to *test* you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good" [Q 5:48]

The unintelligent wonder why God would devise such a design (i.e. test mankind instead of directly taking them to Paradise. Even others are further confused that God created Hell!) Who are you to criticize God's Fashion? We will tell the one deficient in intelligence that, ". . . your Lord creates whatsoever He wills and chooses . . . ." [Q 28:68]. And there is no one who can dispute with Him in that or reverse His judgment. What answer have you prepared if God tells you, "You did not choose me but I chose you . . . ." [John 15:16]? Moreover, "He (God) cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they (mankind) will be questioned" [Q 21:23]. Have you questioned God for creating you with five fingers and not seven, or have you filed a suit against God for making the sun circle and not in a rectangle shape? Then, why do you question God for *designing* life on earth as a testing field? We don't even write a letter to the University Chancellor/Headmaster with the words,

317. Bukhari Vol.4, Bk. 52, No. 191.

318. Brown, Laurence B. MisGod'ed: A Roadmap of Guidance and Misguidance in the Abrahamic Religions. USA: BookSurge Publishing, 2007.p. 210.

"why does your college torture the students with grueling exams? Can't they just attend class and have their degrees after four years without going through exams?" But ignorant people think they are courageous when they question God's designs and intentions? You will agree with me that both men and women don't have a problem with God's design of creating a woman with a soft voice, angelic face, pretty eyes, perfectly-sculptured nose, glossy dimples, fuller lips, long graceful neck, shapely breasts, a perfect waist-hip ratio, hourglass figure, curves that drive humans half-mad, "that leg!" . . . and other marvelous apparatus. That's a *creation* of God who is Wise and it is *also a creation of God* for planet earth to be a testing ground. There is nothing we can do about it. And wishing things were different is a sure way of tormenting yourself.

The Muslim God is a God who ". . . does what He intends (or wills)" [Q 85:16] Unless you have authority above your God then you can gibber a yelp of protest against God's design of testing mankind. "Woe to you who strive with your Maker, earthen vessels with the potter! Does the clay say to the one who fashions it, "What are you making"? or "Your work has no handles"? [Isaiah 45:9]

It is true that there is hardship in adhering to commands and prohibitions of the true religion. If religion wasn't hard, everyone would go to heaven rendering hell desolate. It's the hardship that makes the worshippers great and unique. Hence the proverb: "The diamond cannot be polished without friction, nor the man perfected without trials." However, the hardships in religion are divided into two:

> ***a) The difficulties capable of being handled by man:*** For example fasting everyday from 5 am to 6:30 pm for 30 days (e.g. month of Ramadhan). Also, working from 8 a.m to 5 pm. This is a difficulty man can undertake.
>
> ***b) Difficulties man cannot handle:*** For example, fasting for three months consecutively without eating or drinking whatsoever. This act will cause awful consequences to one's health and can even lead to death. Another example is a employee working from 2 am to 1 am, seven days a week. This is a difficulty man is incapable of handling.

In this respect, the laws of Islam fall under category one i.e. *The difficulties capable of being handled by man*. Rising up at 5 am to go for work is a difficulty workers are capable of handling. Similarly in Islam, waking up before dawn for morning prayers is a difficulty which one can manage. Fasting for a month every year is a trouble men can endure.

After all, there is no system on earth that is devoid of difficulties. There are rules and regulations at your work place. Maybe you are supposed to report to work by 8:00 am, leave at 5:00 pm, work hard, do what your boss commands, e.t.c. The toil and exhaustion at work place is neutralized by the thought of the end month salary but do we recall the infinite reward of the Kingdom of Heaven. "You desire the good of this world, but Allâh desires (for you) the Hereafter. And Allâh is All-Mighty, All-Wise." [Q 8:67]. However difficult your job might be, if you get an assurance that you will be paid handsomely, tranquility descends but why don't we rejoice when we are told that "God has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds [that] for them there is forgiveness and *great reward*." [Q 5:9] When your company tells you that they will pay you good money, you don't complain but when God tells you to "rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven .

. . ." [Mathew 5:12] after toiling in the business of worship, you seem to raise issues. I believe and "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us." [Romans 8:18] Those who expect to enter heaven must undergo the *fatigue* of achieving it. The pain and difficulty is temporary, but quitters will forever loose. "There is no substitute for hard work" (Thomas Edison, Life). Because we agree with Henry Ward Beecher that "the less pain, the less life-capacity", for us to realize the eternal life, we need to persevere all the pains. It is common knowledge that hard work never killed anybody, but ignorantists feel that toiling for God is a violation of human rights.

Patriotism requires that you abide by your country's law. The best spouse is who does what you want. Good kids should respect and adhere to the parents set of rules. Double standard is manifested when God 'who art in heaven' gives you the best rules and you say: "I don't like the rules". Religion is nothing but a set of commands from God and you will hear smart people say: "If you love God, follow His do's and don'ts." Let us reflect on 1 Samuel 13:13, "you have done *foolishly*," Samuel said. "You have *not kept the commandment of the Lord your God*, which he commanded you . . . ." You have often heard people bewail, "religion has so many restrictions, so many rules and laws. It pisses me off". Such are completely ignorant about Jesus' mission. Jesus would want to see you abide by these restrictions and laws. That is infact a very important mission he was sent to accomplish. If you think I am kidding, then hear it from the horse's mouth:

> Do not think that I have come to abolish *the law* or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to *fulfill*. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks *one* of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 5:17-19]

In actual fact, the next verse ". . . unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" [Mathew 5:20] Jesus points out that you better abide by the religious law even *better* than the most religious Jews, scribes and the Pharisees otherwise kingdom of heaven will be a hard-to-get abode. In crystal clear words, Jesus emphasized the importance of abiding by religious rules and restrictions: "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." [John 15:10]. Actually, the verse demonstrates that even Jesus himself was not spared. He follows God's commandments. So who are you to decry that religion is inconveniently stocked with many rules? Since Jesus did not come to abolish the law or the prophets but to fulfill, it is worth knowing the view of the prophets with regard to following God's commandments. For that we are told that success, blessings and prosperity comes "If you will only obey the Lord your God, by *diligently observing all his commandments*" [Deuteronomy 28:1] while curses, disaster, panic, frustration, pain and suffering ". . . shall come upon you, pursuing and overtaking you until you are destroyed, because you *did not obey* the Lord your God, by observing the commandments and the decrees that he commanded you." [Deuteronomy 28:45]. What more proof do people want?

Now, listen to the following conversation between Jesus and a rich young ruler, then answer the question that follows.

Rich young ruler: Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life? [Matthew 19:16]
Jesus: If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.[Matthew 19:17]

Now, answer the following question:

Do you think religion is difficult? Choose one answer.

a) No, religion is easy. You just have to believe that Jesus died for your sins.
b) God is love and full of mercy, he can't make religion difficult.
c) Religion is difficult because there are many rules to be obeyed.
d) None of the above.

Assuming that you didn't pick "none of the above", you would have a 1/3 chance of getting the right answer. You can as well contact the author for the right answer. Otherwise, lets proceed with our discussion. Everyone knows that most laws are made to ensure benefits and prevent harm. The difference is that the Laws in the True Religion are formulated by God whereas the architect for the other Laws is man. Numbskulls believe that man-made Law is better than God's Law. A son can question the relevance of the fathers' rule since man is prone to error but to question God's Judgment shows that you are either smarter than God or extremely ignorant.

Intelligent men know that Life is toil. You get worked up at job. You got to work hard in school. That's no easy. Its toil. The farmer has to till the land. To recover from any illness you have to toil with the bitter drugs. The cook has to struggle in the kitchen. That's hard too. Making babies is not easy. Sex is toil. Spouses have to undergo an energy-taking exercise for them to enjoy sex or make babies. They have to sweat for it. You just don't sit and look at each other. You have to make things happen. If you see someone believing that God is so loving and that he does nothing or little in worshipping yet he claims that he will go to heaven then that guy has sought an unworkable shortcut to heaven. Why should the 'lovely God' punish him in hell? Stop and think that the same lovely God has designed that life is toil. You will never hear one say that God is love so I won't suffer looking for job or hustle at work and I will still get salary at the end month through God's immeasurable love and enduring mercy! One careful observer said "the truth is, everybody I've ever met who's successful is a workaholic." So how can the weak-minded hope to successfully enter Heaven without being workaholic in religion?

Spiritual hijackers tell us: "don't worry, Jesus died for your sins". In other words "don't toil for God, just believe and that's the magic formula to heaven." We are told that God selected an innocent man (Jesus) to die for the sins of Osama bin Laden, Hitler and the others (including that man who raped a two year old girl). Ask any distinguished jurist if it makes sense! Any jury will unanimously say something equivalent of the Biblical verse "The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." [Ezekiel 18:20]

Lawyers often say it is better to let ten guilty men go free than to convict one innocent man. And here we are told that God, (in His 'fair' Judgement!), chose a humble, sinless man to die for the six billion criminals currently on the face of the earth and the billions of sinners who came before us and the billions of criminals to come in future! Muslims will bring the verse from the Qur'an which says that God is ". . . the best of forgivers" [Q 7:155], and would wonder, "is killing *one innocent* person for the sins of mankind the best way of forgiving mankind? Murad Wilfried Hofmann, a graduate of Law at Harvard Law School (1960), former German diplomat and Director of Information for NATO writes: "What kind of God is this, goes the question, who cannot correct something going wrong in His creation except by conceiving a son of His and sacrificing him in the cruelest of fashions."[319] And if Jesus indeed died for our sins, why is it that children are born with sins (original sin). Is it not double jeopardy? If IMF pardons Kenya her debt, and still demand to be paid, can we really call that pardoning? If Adam was the one who made the sin of eating the apple, then why didn't God allow Adam to be crucified? God can do anything, why didn't he bring Adam back to atone the sins?

Overwhelming scriptural evidences prove that Jesus' philosophy is that of "every-one-for-himself-and-God-for-us-all" (i.e. toiling for God). He said: "Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who *does* the will of my Father in heaven." [Matthew 7:21] Any quick-witted person will understand the phrase "but only the one who does the will of my Father (i.e. God)" to mean actions and anyone whose sense is common knows that actions come with difficulties. In fact, Jesus likened the person who doesn't follow the do's and don'ts of religion as *foolish* and the one who keep God's laws as wise. Jesus said:

> Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a *wise* man who built his house on the rock . . . but everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a *foolish* man who built his house on the sand . . . . [Mathew 7:24-26]

Basing on Jesus' benchmark, men on earth are either extremely wise or extremely foolish. Or should I stand on the pulpit and preach:

> What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also *faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead*. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O *foolish* man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a *man is justified by works, and not by faith only*. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is

319. Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.p. 136.

dead, so faith without works is dead also. [James 14:26]

The preceding sermon was delivered by James, a very authoritative figure. We therefore see that the necessity of following religious laws is exerted and exhorted by James, the leader of the Church in Jerusalem and who was also Jesus' own brother (as reported in the Bible). No wonder we are told to "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." [Mathew 7:13-14] Imagine someone telling you, "Salvation hinges on individual acceptance of Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour." No one doubts that accepting Jesus as personal Saviour is the easiest thing on earth. Where is the narrowness in that? The Way/Religion of Jesus was no joke. It was hard. It was difficult. It was narrow. You had better "Enter by the narrow gate". Even non-Muslims admit that Islam is a religion full of 'narrowness.' Critical minds will read Mathew 7:13-14 and notice these phrases: Narrow Way and Broad Way.

►**Narrow Way**: Is the True Religion which is always characterized with difficulties. Few have the audacity to cling to the difficulties of this True Religion.

►**Broad Way**: Is the False Religion(s) - comfort and luxury is its hallmark. Many choose to be emancipated from the difficulties of the True Religion by walking in the Broad Way.

If Christianity is the True Way/Religion, whoever discards its do's and don'ts is still walking in the Broad Way. If Islam is the True Way/Religion, whoever refuses to be disturbed by the Islamic sharia is still walking in the Broad Way. To such, the Kingdom of Heaven remains elusive. Let us use our brains before they become atrophied or completely vestigial. Are there people who had seen the narrowness of the way of Muhammad than his companions in Makka? They were severely persecuted to an extent that Muhammad asked some to emigrate to Abyssinia to receive protection under the Just Christian ruler, the Negus. Hearing the attempted emigration, the Non-believers of Makka dispatched a group which reached Abyssinia appealing to the King to return the Muslim migrants. In a commission of inquiry summoned by the King which included both parties, Ja'afar, Muhammad's follower, presented their case:

O king! We were plunged in the *depth of ignorance* and barbarism; we adored idols, we lived in unchastity, we ate the dead bodies, and we spoke abominations, we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood were neglected; we knew no law but that of the strong, when Allah raised among us a man (Muhammad), of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware; and he called to the Oneness of Allah and taught us not to associate anything with Him. He forbade us the worship of idols; and he enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of the neighbours and kith and kin; he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to fly from the vices, and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to render alms, and to observe fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship Allah and not to associate anything with Him, and we have allowed what He has allowed, and prohibited what He has prohibited. For this reason, our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forsake the worship of Allah and return to the worship of idols and other abominations.

They have tortured and injured us, until finding no safety among them, we have come to your country, and hope you will protect us from oppression.[320]

Non-observing Muslims

Those who discovered the true religion and embraced it have made an intelligent decision. However, those who claim to be adherents of the true religion are not intelligent if they don't practice their religion accordingly. Anyone with an iota of intelligence would know that Faith coupled with action is the only way to salvation. Islam teaches that non-observing Muslims will face a series of punishments, on earth, in the grave, on Day of Judgment or in Hellfire, then when their sins are wiped out, they will be removed from punishment and be put in paradise *forever*. As long as they perform the five daily prayers (and not associate God with anything). Islam teaches that the non-Muslims will be put to punishment forever. The sinful Muslims in Hell will be rescued from the torment of hellfire and the non-Muslims will regret having lived in disbelief, and will wish that they had been Muslims in this world. The Qur'an narrates the regret of that day: ". . . those who disbelieve will wish that they had been Muslims." [Q 15:2].

Using one's intelligence means carefully analysing the two options we have; to toil in religion for the 40 to 70 years of your life and live happily forever in paradise or plunge into the transient enjoyment for the 40 to 70 years on earth and suffer in hell for long. If you are intelligent, which option would you take? Don't we see that it is an excellent gain to sacrifice pleasure in order to avoid pain? Something that Benjamin Franklin supports: "The honest man pains, and then enjoys pleasures, the knave takes pleasure, and then suffers pain."

And why on earth are these non-observing Muslims residing within wickedness? Can't they seek refuge from ignorance just like Prophet Joseph? Prophet Joseph was extremely handsome. The women around him devised some evil and wicked plots to lure him into illegal sexual acts but Joseph knew that committing sinful acts is to become extremely ignorant. Joseph beseeched help from God: ". . . if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them and [thus] be of the ignorant." [Q 12:33]. Smart people know that no one sins except he has put a garment of ignorance. And ignorant people are transformed to smartness after repenting whenever they commit mistakes. "Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." [Q 39:53]. Qur'anic account goes that Joseph was thrown into a well by his brothers when he was young. He was later picked up by a passing caravan and sold as a slave in Egypt but later Joseph experienced upward mobility to the position of a Minister. When his brothers were struck with famine, they travelled to Egypt where they met Joseph who reminded them of who he was. "Do you know what you did with Joseph and his brother when you were ignorant" [Q 12:89], Joseph said. We see that Joseph synonymies sinful acts with ignorance. Stop and think of Ian Tattersall's statement: "Behavior is ultimately the product of the brain."[321] Then, ask yourself, are the Muslims behaving badly a sign that their brains are deficient? I personally believe that a healthy brain, a smart brain produces pleasant-to-God behaviors.

320. Al-Mubarakpuri (2002) p. 121.Also see Ibn Hisham, as-Seerat an-Nabawiyyah, Vol. I, pp. 334—338

321. Tattersall, Ian. Becoming Human: Evolution and Human Uniqueness. 1st1 ed. Harcourt, 1998.

Hope For Change

"Teach thy tongue to say 'I do not know' and thou shalt progress."
~ Maimonides

Because it is commonly known, even by the journalist Abdulrahman al-Rashed, that "self-cure starts with self realization and confession", we are confident that there is always hope for change but as long as you are conscious that you are ignorant rather than pretending you are smart. Let there be a club in the footsteps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) which should be designed to help the ignorant become smart. And it should be called Ignorant Anonymous (IA). Just like the first meeting at AA, you have to stand up and say "My name is so and so and I'm an alcoholic" similarly those people suffering from the agonies of ignorance should unflinchingly stand up and admit, "My name is Atti Tude and I'm ignorant of the religion of Islam. The only knowledge I know about Islam is from these biased media and antagonists of Islam." Others should clap at his courage of admitting the reality so that another person is encouraged to say "my name is Sahara Fried-man and I am ignorant of existence of the word of God. I regret for not having read the entire Qur'an/ Bible and as a consequence, I found myself accompanied with confusion, distress and misery." After other members burst into a "Hello Sahara!", Mr Poppin should proceed with, "I'm Poppin Sparkle and I am unaware of Muhammad's Prophethood. However, I am recovering from naivety and I am now reading the biography of Prophet Muhammad." Before the meeting ends, the last person at IA would stand up with his sobering confession: "my name is Pilot Inspektor and I'm ignorant of the authenticity of Qur'an. I have to admit that my busy life has distracted me from verifying the genuineness of Qur'an as a word of God."

People who have a chance of becoming successful are those with the courage of saying "maybe you're right" or the flipside of it, "maybe I'm wrong". And if you believe that prejudice never shows much reason then we may want to ask, have you ever let the following statement cross your mind: "Maybe Muslims are right and we are wrong?" We should have the audacity to say like Marcus Tullius Cicero: "I am not ashamed to confess I am ignorant of what I do not know." Or like the determination of Saul: ". . . I have been a *fool*, and have made a great mistake." [1 Samuel 26:21] And obviously, learned men will nod in vigorous agreement with Richard Cecil's statement: "The first step towards knowledge is to know that we are ignorant." However, after recognizing who we really are, we should then dispel the curse of ignorance through studying about God and end up submitting to Him. It is those who are infinitely ignorant who are denied access to the kingdom of God. As a matter of fact, all of us were born ignorant of many things but it was through study and examination that stupidity vaporized. And if you treasure the advice of Benjamin Franklin, then heed his precious words: "Being ignorant is not so much a shame as being unwilling to learn." You can always be smart unless you proudly chose to be a bastion of ignorance. "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and *fools* hate knowledge?" [Proverbs 1:22]

Reason and seeking knowledge about God can wrestle and overthrow ignorance. And whenever the know-nothing criticizes you for becoming a serious questor after the Truth of religions, always remember to ". . . turn away from the *ignorant*" [Q 7:199] Be humble and emulate the model of righteous people who walk on the surface of the earth in humility and sedateness, ". . . and when

the *ignorant* address them, they say, "Peace!" [Q25:63] and keep on doing good because ". . . by doing good you may put to silence the *ignorance of foolish* men." [1 Peter 2:15]

The yes-we-can philosophy can help you jump from the planet of ignorance to safe landing in the Empire of Smart people. We believe that by becoming a member of smart people you will reap a great deal of benefits for "He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of *fools* will be destroyed." [Proverbs 13:20] Whether sin is ignorance or ignorance is sin, what is worth-celebrating is that there is always a way out. The Qur'an has this message to the ignorant:

> Allâh accepts only the repentance of those who do evil in *ignorance and foolishness* and repent soon afterwards; it is they to whom Allâh will forgive and Allâh is Ever AllKnower, AllWise. And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says: "Now I repent;" nor of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful torment. [Q 4:17-18]

Intelligent Flash-Forward

Let's come back to our senses. Let's put prejudice away. We should investigate the scriptures for their authenticity and we should use our intelligence to see the truth, not just our hearts. And how beautiful if we combine both the brain and the heart. That's what Rob Kall implied by saying, "The brain gives the heart its sight. The heart gives the brain its vision" and in another version, "The heart holds answers the brain refuses to see." In strong agreement to this concept is the saying of Charles H. Perkhurst: "The heart has eyes which the brain knows nothing of." Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a very influential French mathematician and philosopher who is credited with inventing an early calculator. He seemed to believe that the heart plays a crucial role in decision-making for he stated: "We know the truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart." The heart is a source of intelligence even according to the Qur'an:

> And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless. [Q 7: 179].

To prove that the heart also reasons, the Qur'an states about those who don't want to employ raison d'être to see the guidance (true religion): "So have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts." [Q 22:46] and in another verse, God says: "Their *hearts* are sealed up, so they understand not." [Q 9:87]. Also see [Q 46:26; Q 16:22; Q 50:37; Q 63:3; Q 17:46; Q 6:25; Q 9:87]. The Bible as well present similar perspectives, like in Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." Jesus himself asked, "Why are you *reasoning in your hearts*?" [Luke 5:22] and ". . . that you may know the thoughts of your heart." [Daniel 2:30].

Since both the Qur'an and the Bible acknowledge the reasoning power of the heart, it is not difficult to believe that ". . . scientists have found that the heart has its own independent nervous system – a complex system referred to as "the brain in the heart." There are at least forty thousand neurons (nerve cells) in the heart . . . ."[322] And hence there is the arrival of Neurocardiology, a new medical field exploring the "brain in the heart". For those who neither trust the Qur'an nor the Bible, the scientific affirmation of this concept will make them nod in agreement. It has recently been discovered that the Heart has a brain.

> When you hear the word intelligence the first thing you think of probably isn't the heart. But new research has shown that the heart is in fact smart. The brain in our head is dutifully obeying messages that are being sent from another brain, "the brain in the heart." The heart isn't just a throbbing mass of muscle, it's actually quite a sensitive instrument that is processing critical information. With every beat of the heart intricate messages are being sent to the brain and other bodily systems. In fact, these messages are being received by every cell in our body.[323]

Communication between the heart and brain occurs in the following four ways: neurologically (through the transmission of nerve impulses), biochemically (via hormones and neurotransmitters), biophysically (through pressure waves) and energetically (through electromagnetic field interactions).[324] Dr. J. Andrew Armour is a neurologist from Montreal and one of the early pioneers in Neurocardiology. Together with Dr. Jeffrey Ardell, Dr. Armour edited *Neurocardiology*, wherein it was unraveled that the heart has a brain:

> The heart possesses its own little brain, capable of complex computational analysis of its own. Data clearly indicate that the intrinsic cardiac nervous system acts as much more than a simple relay station for intrinsic autonomic projections to the heart . . . . An understanding of the complex anatomy and function of the heart's nervous system contributes an additional dimension to the newly emerging view of the heart as a sophisticated information processing centre, functioning not only in concert with the brain but also independent of it.[325]

So as we are all aware that the heart pumps blood, we should also know that the heart pumps reason. Hence we should disdain from the one-sided approach to religious truth but rather use the head-heart approach. 'Moderation in all things' is an Islamic Principle. Muhammad, the Messenger of God said "Take a moderate path . . . ."[326] A bird cannot fly with one wing. It needs both wings to balance. In Islam, if you lack both wings, you won't fly to Heaven. Thus, Muslims reason both with the brain and the heart." If we employ both heart thinking and head thinking,

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322. Childre, Doc and Howard Martin with Donna Beech. The HeartMath Solution. SanFransisco: HarperOne, 2000. Also see, Institute of HeartMath. "The Intelligent Heart." heartmath.org 10 Dec. 2002. <http://www.heartmath.org>; "Can your heart think and feel?" lostartsofthemin. 28 Nov. 2006. <http://www.lostartsoft-hemind.com/2006/11/can-your-heart-think-and-feel.html>

323. Gabriella "Gaby" Boehmer. "Are you thinking with your head or your heart?" heartmath.com.15 March 2001. <http://www.heartmath.com/company/proom/archive/head_heart_connect.html>

324. Institute of HeartMath. "Science of The Heart: Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance." heartmath.org <http://www.heartmath.org/research/science-of-the-heart-head-heart-interactions.html> Last retrieved 16 April 2009.

325. Mushtaq, Gohar. The Intelligent Heart, the Pure Heart : An Insight into the Heart Based on the Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science, p.8 as cited in Armour , Andrew J. and Jeffrey L. Ardell. Neurocardiology: Anatomical and Functional Principle. California: Institute of HeartMath, 2003.

326. Ahmad 4/422.

then, our religious quandaries will vanish in the thin air.

You will know the true religion when your heart and your mind are saying the same thing. When you are told to "follow what your heart tells you is right" or when you hear a whisper: "listen to your heart", it must always be a rational following and not a blind one. To follow what your brain tells is something like believing that one plus one plus one is three. To follow what your heart (little brain) says is like believing that one plus one plus one plus one is also three. No contradiction for the brain is intelligent and the heart is intelligent. But if your heart tells you that 1+1+1 equals to one (Trinity for instance) and your brain tells you that 1+1+1 equals to three, ". . . For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the *hearts* which are within the breasts." [Q 22:46]

It is very important to embrace the true religion in order to save ourselves from the Hellfire. Life is a test and a test requires intelligence. Rene Descartes (1596-1650), a philosopher and scientist proclaimed that: "It is not enough to have a good mind. The main thing is to use it well." The Qur'an gives us a flash forward of what will happen on the Day of Judgment with emphasis to those who extolled cognitive decline.

> And for those who disbelieve in their Lord (Allāh) is the torment of Hell, and worst indeed is that destination.When they are cast therein, they will hear the (terrible) drawing in of its breath as it blazes forth. It almost bursts up with fury. Every time a group is cast therein, its keeper will ask: "Did no warner come to you?" They will say: "Yes indeed; a warner did come to us, but we belied him and said: 'Allāh never sent down anything (of revelation), you are only in great error.'"And they will say: "*Had we but listened or used our intelligence*, we would not have been among the dwellers of the blazing Fire!" [Q 67:6-10]

The Lightest Punishment In Hell

Let's hear the lightest punishment in Hell as reported by the Prophet of Islam: "The least punished person of the (Hell) Fire people on the Day of Resurrection will be a man under whose arch of the feet two smouldering embers will be placed, because of which his brain will boil just like Al-Mirjal (copper vessel) or a Qum-qum (narrow-necked vessel) is boiling with water."[327] And in a different narration, Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said that ". . . the least suffering for the inhabitants of Fire would be for him who would have two shoes and two laces of Fire (on his feet), and with these would boil *his brain* as boils the cooking vessel, and he would think that he would not see anyone in a more grievous torment than him, whereas he would be in the least torment."[328] That's the slightest punishment but his *brains* will boil. Why is the brain mentioned? I think the brain is also paying the price. People will enter Hellfire because they didn't use their brain. In religious texts especially in Islam, the part that sinned is ascribed punishment. You've heard of Sharia-governed countries chopping off the hands of thieves.

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327. Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 76, No. 567. Also see Bukhari Vol. 8, Bk. 76, No. 566; Muslim Bk. 1, No. 414.

328. Muslim Bk. 1, No. 415. Regarding the realities of that Day of Judgment, Prophet Muhammad narrates another must-be-considered flash forward: "Allah will say to that person of the (Hell) Fire who will receive the least punishment, 'If you had everything on the earth, would you give it as a ransom to free yourself (i.e. save yourself from this Fire)?' He will say, 'Yes.' Then Allah will say, 'While you were in the backbone of Adam, I asked you much less than this, i.e. not to worship others besides Me (i.e. worship strictly One God and to adhere to His do's and Don'ts), but you insisted on worshipping others besides me.'" See Bukhari Vol. 4, Bk. 55, No. 551; Muslim Bk. 39, No. 6733.

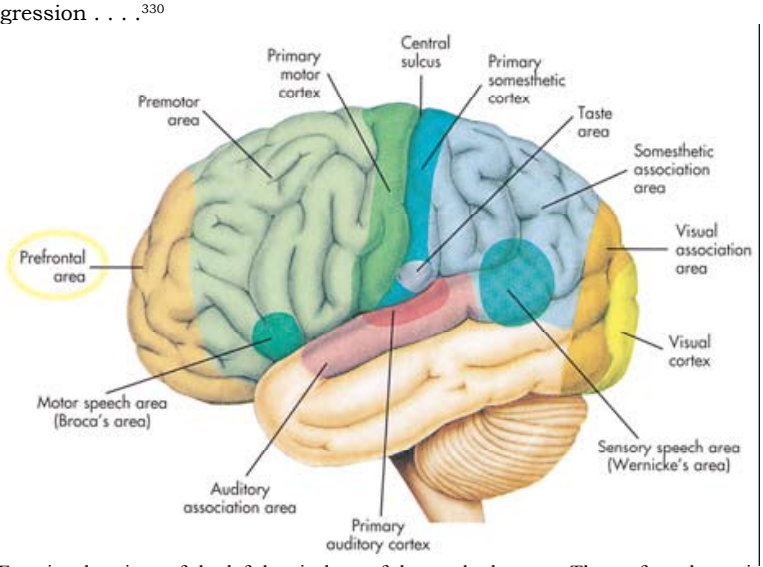
At the time of Prophet Muhammad, there was a man who was highly acclaimed for his wisdom and smartness. His name was Amr ibn Hisham but people called him "The Father of Wisdom" in Arabic Abu l-Hakam. But because this "Father of Wisdom" failed to recognize the strict Oneness of God, because he failed to acknowledge the rationality of Muhammad's religion and because he wanted to extinguish Muhammad's Godly-supported religion, Muhammad had no option but to call him "Father of Ignorance" in Arabic Abu Jahl. And perhaps statistician may want to know how many Fathers of ignorance do we have in the 21st century? ". . . I take refuge with God, lest I should be one of the ignorant." [Q 2:67].

Abu Jahl, one of the staunchest enemies of Prophet Muhammad had threatened the Prophet against performing *Salah* (prayer) at the Ka`bah. In fact he warned saying: ". . . if I see him (Muhammad) praying like this (i.e. in prostration), I will stomp on his neck, and I will certainly put his face in the dust." Then God revealed: "No! If he does not desist, We will surely drag him by the *forelock. A lying, sinning forelock.*" [Q 96:15-16]. This verse has a scientific miracle. Where are the scientists, where are the neurologists? God properly described the front of the head as lying and sinful when someone lies or commits a sin. That is exactly what Science tells us regarding the function of the front part of the head:

> The motivation and the foresight to plan and initiate movements occur in the anterior portion of the frontal lobes, *the prefrontal area.* This is a region of association cortex . . . .[329]

Essentials of Anatomy & Physiology further states:

> In relation to its involvement in motivation, the prefrontal area is also thought to be the functional center for aggression . . . .[330]



Functional regions of the left hemisphere of the cerebral cortex. The prefrontal area is located at the front of the cerebral cortex. *[Essentials of Anatomy & Physiology, Seeley and others, p. 210.]*

329. Seeley, Rod R., et al. Essentials of Anatomy & Physiology. 2nd ed. St. Louis: Mosby-Year Book, Inc., 1996. p. 211. Also see Noback, Charles R., et al. The Human Nervous System, Introduction and Review. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1991. pp. 410-411.

330. Seeley, Rod R., et al. Essentials of Anatomy & Physiology. 2nd ed. St. Louis: Mosby-Year Book, Inc., 1996. p. 211.

Back to our argument. God, in Qur'an assigns punishment to the part responsible for sin. Now, the person with least punishment, the prophet says, ". . . his brain will boil", should we not set aside emotions and use our brains to search and embrace the true religion or do we want our brains to boil in Hell? Those who traded away reason, should make an effort to re-install it back.

We often hear statements like: Be smart! Use your brain! Are you out of your mind! That wouldn't have happened if you had used your head! Have you lost your mind! Your head is just a mass of skeleton! He has turned off his brain! You've just won a boofhead award! He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would fully suffice! Heads but no brains! Your head's full of debris! You bozo! If only you had a cerebral cortex! He is just a featherbrained wacko! He is cracked-up! Your brain is full of spiders! Were you born stupid?! Look at this bonehead! Do you sometimes use your brains! What a dolt, dunce, and dunderhead! A goof is born! Where have your brains gone! Your brain has travelled out of the skull and it seems wherever it is, it has been detained by immigration officers! You checked your brain and it seems it's lost! You must have checked out of Hotel Brainy years ago! You are such a gibbering numbskull! I don't think you have grey matter in your brain! You must have kept your brains in jars! He is a pure nutcase! You're getting a cavity in your brain! No, you are suffering from neuron-deficiency! You are either a bear of very little brain or a bear of no brain at all! You better grow up! Your tiny little brain slipped down the kitchen sink! If you go to a mind reader they wouldn't bother charging! Is your brain about the size of a walnut! A bird bore a hole in your head and laid eggs inside it, you might think you're having a good idea but it's just eggs hatching! You dumb-witted moron! You complain of your looks, but not once do you complain of your brains! Empty-headed! You had better grow up! Your head is similar to that of a scarecrow! Your brain is mushed up! Your skull encloses a cabbage! What a blockhead! Lord, what fools these mortals be! You empty-skulled! Did you forget to pay your brain bill! What a splendid head, yet no brain! You are a useless loon! He is sick in the head! Oh no, you must be brain dead! . . . .

We often hear people saying such "beautiful" lines when we have done something stupid or when ignorance is at work. Such lines are often uttered by *a third party* but what if the very person working ignorance admits to himself, "Oh, I didn't use my brain!" Now can you name few great minds/geniuses you've heard of, probably some are Nobel Prize winners. Don't forget the apprentice. Even the smartest teachers in your school . . . and the best student in . . . oh and the President of . . . and the Prime Minister of . . . and the contender for the title of the world's most intelligent person. The Qur'an says that all those 'brightest minds' will be condemned to hell because they didn't use their *intelligence*; to search for the true religion and embrace it. Those 'smart' people will, in fact, admit before everyone that they are extremely ignorant. How I wish people I care about would never come to say: ". . . Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we would not have been among the dwellers of the blazing Fire!" [Q 67:10]

Confirmed Ignorance

"I'm ashamed to admit it, but before September 11, I didn't pay much attention to Islam… when it comes to Islamic culture and history and its long engagement with the west, I was virtually ignorant." [331]

~ Jeremy Rifkin

He is the well-known American economist. He is the author of The Age of Access and president of the Foundation on Economic Trends in Washington

"People are ignorant about the religion of Islam. People don't understand that Islam today is a European religion . . ." [332]

~ Ingmar Karlsson

Ingmar Karlsson was Sweden's consul general in İstanbul since September 2001. He had previously served as ambassador in Prague and Bratislava. Karlsson is a Doctor of Divinity honoris causa at Lund University and a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Växjö. He also studied business administration, political science and the history of ideas and learning at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. He has authored more than 10 books on the subjects of Europe's relationship with faith, terrorism, Islam and minorities. Some of his books, include: Islam and Europe - confrontation or coexistence? (1994), The Stepchildren of Europe - minorities without a mother-nation (2003), Faith, terror and tolerance - essays on religion and politics (2004), and A Europe of the regions (2006)

"One third of Australians are completely ignorant of the Islamic faith . . . ." [333]

According to the 2006 survey conducted by Roy Morgan research in Australia.

331. Rifkin, Jeremy. "Dialogue is a Necessity." The Guardian 13 Nov. 2001.

332. "Islam is and will be a European religion." Today's Zaman 12 March 2007.

333. "Third of Aussies ignorant about Islam: survey." The Age 20 March 2006.

"Americans Ignorant of Islam . . ." [334]

A title from Islamonline reflecting the poll by Pew Research Center

"Most Americans have never read a verse from the Qur'an, nor met a person they knew to be Muslim. Their distorted images of Islam come from snippets of television news and headlines that falsely link Islam with terrorism and the degradation of women. They have no awareness of Islamic principles and beliefs—monotheism, peace, charity, compassion, interfaith tolerance, women's rights—common principles that should bind Muslims, Christians, and Jews together." [335]

~ Paul Findley.
He represented Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives for 22 years. He is the author of the bestselling book, *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront the Israel Lobby*.

"People with power and influence in the U.S. have been saying some very stupid things about Islam and about Muslims since September 11. Some of it is rooted in conscious malice, and ethnic prejudice that spills over into religious bigotry. But some is rooted in sheer historical and geographical ignorance . . . . As an educator, in Asian Studies, at a fairly elite university, I am painfully aware of this ignorance." [336]

~ Gary Leupp

Gary Leupp is an an associate professor, Department of History, Tufts University and coordinator, Asian Studies Program. In his article he clarified his identity saying, "Oh, and by the way, I'm not a Muslim, but what those on the Christian right revile as a "secular humanist."

334. IOL Staff. "Americans Ignorant of Islam: Poll." islamonline.net 26 Sep. 2007. <http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1189959448918&pagename=Zone-English-News/NWELayout>

335. Findley, Paul. Silent No More: Confronting America's False Images of Islam. Maryland: Amana Publications, 2001.

336. Leupp, Gary. "Challenging Ignorance on Islam: a Ten-Point Primer for Americans." Counterpunch 24 July 2002. <http://www.counterpunch.org/leupp0724.html>

"The totally erroneous statements made about Islam in the West are sometimes the result of ignorance, and sometimes of systematic denigration."[337]

~ Maurice Bucaille

He was a member of the French Society of Egyptology, a medical doctor, and chief of the surgical clinic at the University of Paris. Apart from being a specialist in gastroenterology, Dr. Bucaille is also the author of various scholarly works. He was once a family physician to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and also some of his patients were relatives of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. At the age of 50, he devoted his time to learn the Arabic language. He had also embarked on a deep study of Islam and Qur'an. Dr. Maurice Bucaille is associated with two medical eponyms.

337. Bucaille, Maurice, M.D. The Bible, the Qur'an and Science. Lahore: Kazi publications, 1977 . pp. 110-111.

SUMMARY

The entire book may be summarised in the following points:

- Smart people are those who put aside prejudice and arrogance, objectively search for the true religion and embrace it wholeheartedly. Islam is a religion that appeals to reason and those who follow such a religion are indeed the smartest people.

- Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. In fact, being a Muslim is the latest style.

- People from all races and all status embrace Islam.

- Islam is an inextinguishable religion.

- It is a matter of time before Islam dominates the entire planet. We can prophesize that *Sharia* Law will be implemented on all corners of the globe.

- People are broadly divided into two: The Ignorant and the Smart.

- The world is divided into two: the House of Ignorantists (Daarul Jahl) and the House of Intellect-Users (Daarul Aql).

FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

For more information on Muslim reverts/converts, and the growth of Islam, the following are some of the recommended books:

1. *Islam Our Choice: Portraits of Modern American Muslim Women* by Debra L. Dirks & Stephanie Parlove [Paperback: 304 pages]
2. *Coming to Islam, A Muslim Anthology*, Volume I, Compiled by Majida Amat'Al-Quddus [Paperback: 264 pages]
3. *Why Islam is Our Only Choice* by Muhammad H. Shahid [Pages: 298]
4. *Converts to Islam* compiled By Zaynab [ISBN: 964-438-644-2, pages:264]
5. *American Jihad: Islam after Malcolm X* by Steven Barboza [Paperback: 384 pages]
6. *The Rise of Islam,* by Harun Yahya [pages:205]
7. *Women Embracing Islam, Gender and Conversion in the West* , Edited by Karin van Nieuwkerk [Paperback: 308 pages]
8. *Engaged Surrender: African American Women and Islam* By Carolyn Moxley Rouse [Paperback:288 pages]
9. *The Sun Is Rising in the West: Journey to Islam: New Muslims Tell About Their Journey to Islam* By Muzaffar Haleem and Betty Batul Bowman [Paperback: 317 pages]
10. *Becoming Muslim: Western Women's Conversions to Islam (Culture, Mind and Society)* By Anna Mansson McGinty [Hardcover: 216 pages]
11. *Daughters of Another Path:* Experiences of American Women Choosing Islam by Carol L. Anway [Paperback: 215 pages]
12. *Conversion to Islam: A study of native British Converts* by Ali Kose [Hardcover: 182 pages]
13. *British Muslim Converts: Choosing Alternative Lives* by Kate Zebiri [Paperback: 304 pages]
14. *Conversion to Islam: Untouchables Strategy for Protest in India* By Abdul Malik Mujahid [Paperback: 159 pages]
15. *Islam in America* by Jane I. Smith [Paperback: 355 pages]
16. *Muslims in America: Race, Politics, and Community Building* by Mbaye Lo [Paperback: 160]
17. *Religion on The Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium* By Murad Wilfried Hofmann [Paperback: 248 pages]
18. *New Muslims in the European Context: the Experience of Scandinavian Converts* By Anne Sofie Roald [Hardcover: 375 pages]
19. *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim missionary activity and the dynamics of conversion to Islam* by Larry Poston. [Hardcover: 240 pages]
20. *Black Pilgrimage to Islam* by Robert Dannin [Paperback: 368 pages]
21. *Conversion to Islam* Edited By Nehemia Levtzion. [Hardcover: 272 pages]
22. *Understanding the Stages of Conversion to Islam: the Voices of British Converts* by Maha Al Qwidi
23. *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe* by Tomas Gerholmn and Yngve Georg Lithman [Paperback: 302 pages]
24. *Islam: The Alternative* By Murad Hofmann [Paperback: 168 pages]
25. *Priests embracing Islam by* Chaplain Yusuf Estes [Paperback: 77 pages]

26. *Real and Wonderful Stories : Seekers of Truth Who Discovered Islam* by Abdurahim bin Mizhir Almalki [Paperback :242 Pages]
27. *An Undeniable Fact: Prominent Church People Enter Islam* Compiled by Abdelrahim Bin Mizhir Al Malki [Paperback: 66 Pages]
28. Islam Our Choice: Impressions of revert's to Islam, Author unknown[Paperback: 55 pages]
29. Stories of New Muslims
30. Islam Our Choice compiled and edited by Ebrahim Ahmed Bawany,
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Search It Yourself

For additional resources (books, web articles, videos . . .) on the increasing number of converts to Islam, go to any search engine such as:

- www.google.com
- www.yahoo.com
- www.live.com
- www.ask.com
- e.t.c.

Or any online video website such as:

- www.youtube.com
- www.youtubeislam.com
- www.muslimvideo.com
- www.myspace.com
- www.dailymotion.com
- www.video.google.com
- www.islamictube.net
- www.truveo.com
- www.video.aol.com
- www.vodpod.com
- e.t.c.

. . . and type in the search tab “converts to Islam” or “Reverts to Islam” or “New Muslims” or “revert Muslims” or “embraced Islam” or “turned to Islam” or “from Christianity to Islam” or “becoming Muslim” or “changed to Islam” or “Islam is growing fast” or “Islam the fastest growing religion” or “Jewish/British/American/Latino/German converts to Islam” . . . and go through the information/watch the video clips by yourself.

You Can Get the Books From Online Bookstores

The books and the other (Resources) can be ordered from any of the online bookstores such as:

- www.onlineislamicstore.com
- www. astrolable.com
- www.islamicbookstore.com
- www.kitaabun.com
- www.iqra.org
- www.amazon.com (amazon.ca, amazon.co.uk, amazon.de)
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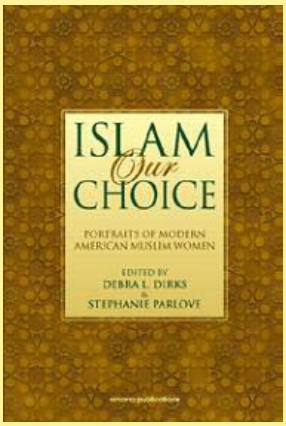

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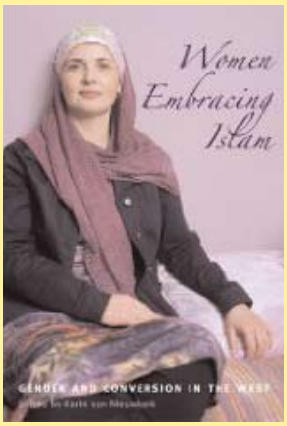

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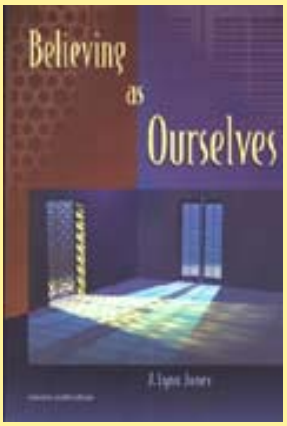

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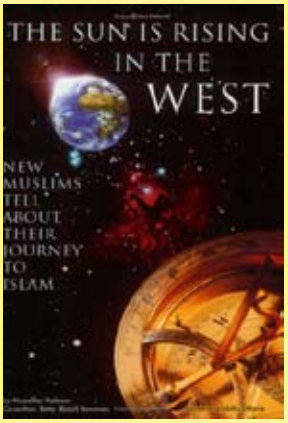

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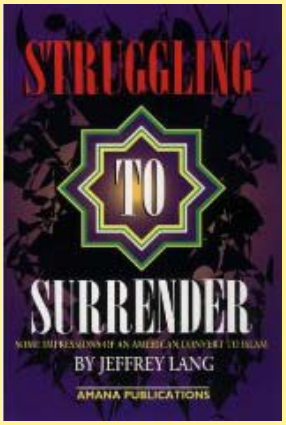

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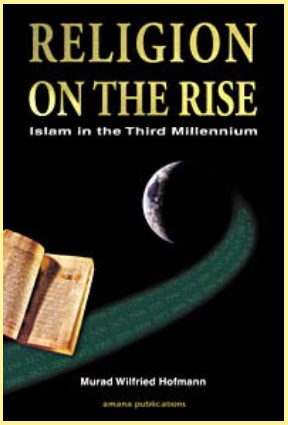

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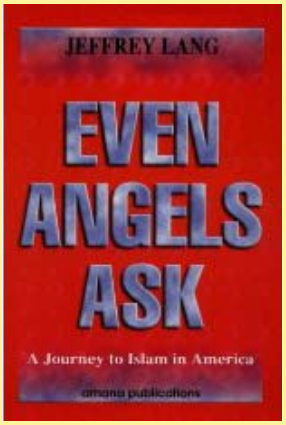

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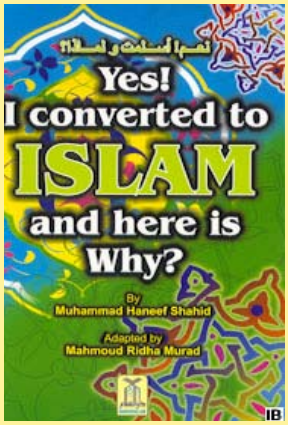

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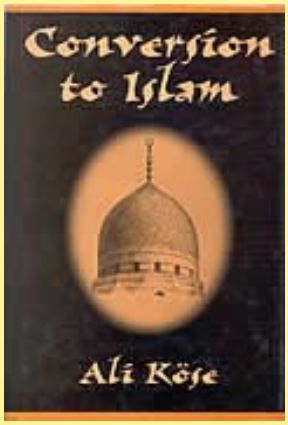

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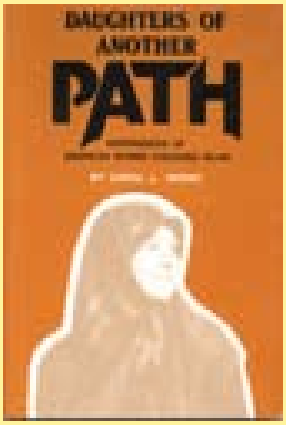

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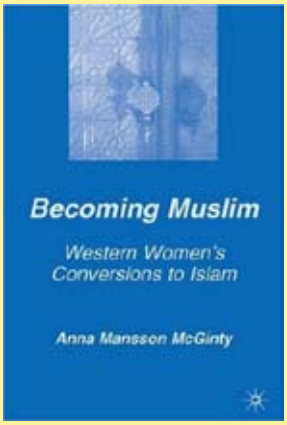

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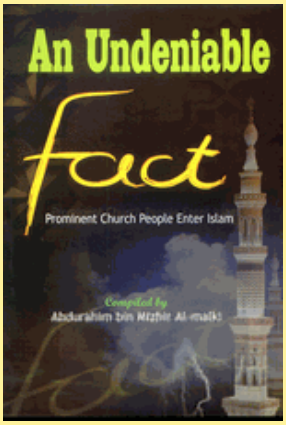

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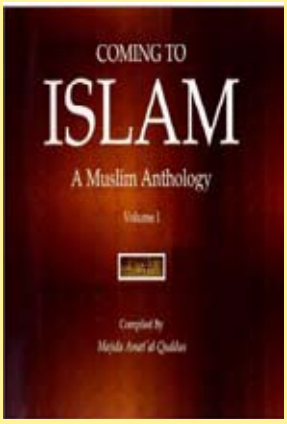

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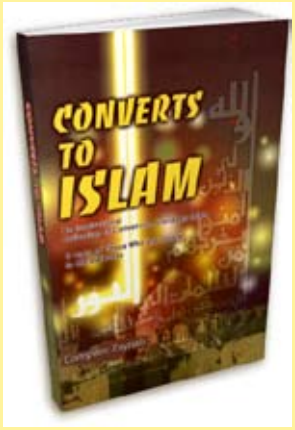

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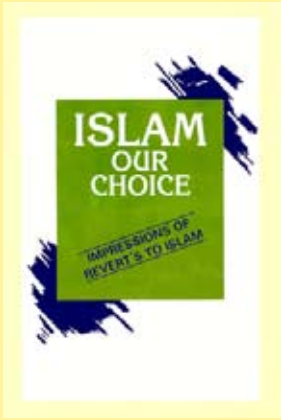

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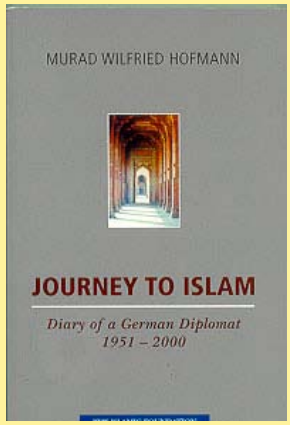

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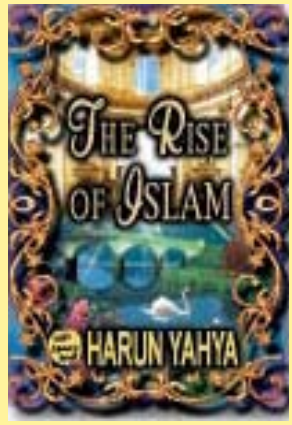

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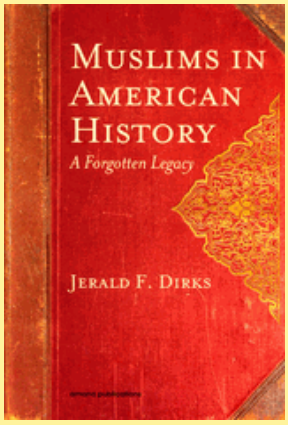

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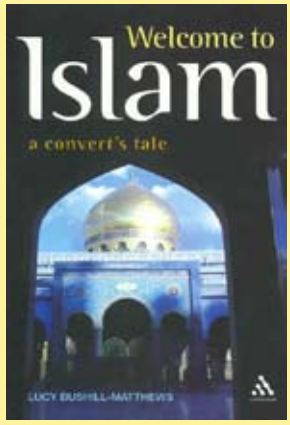

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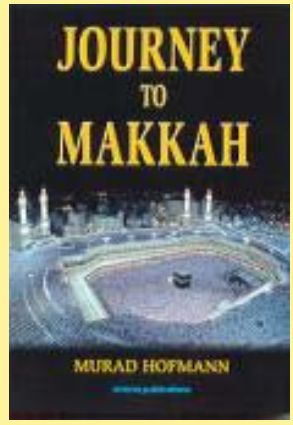

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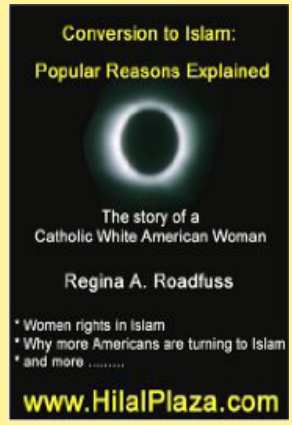

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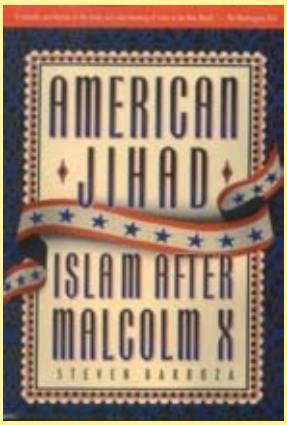

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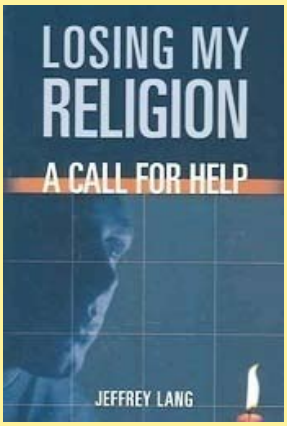

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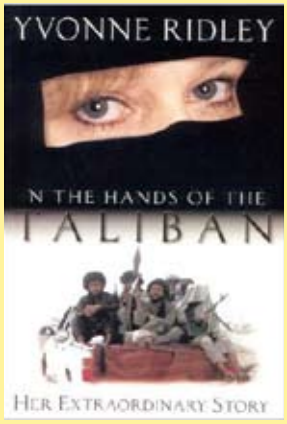

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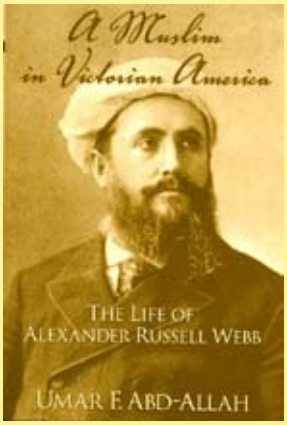

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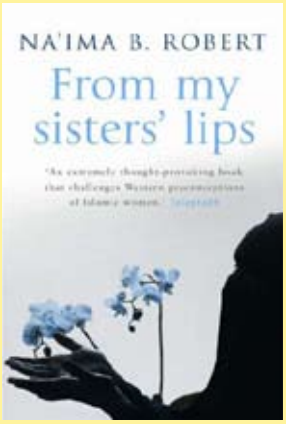

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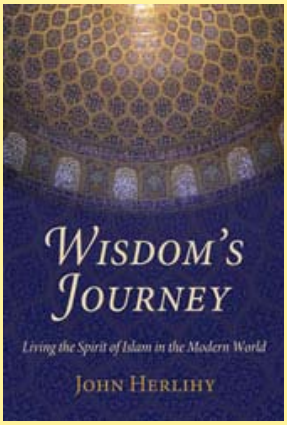

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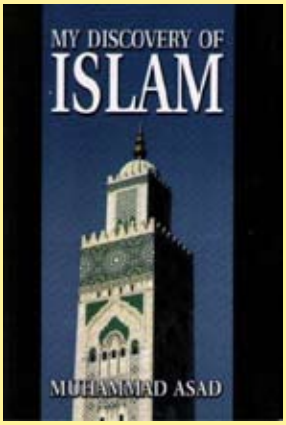

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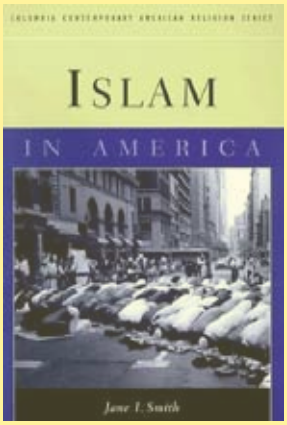

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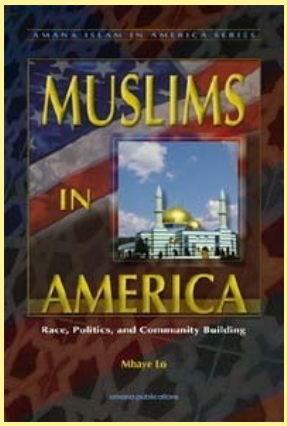

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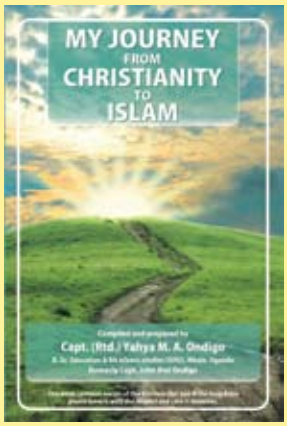

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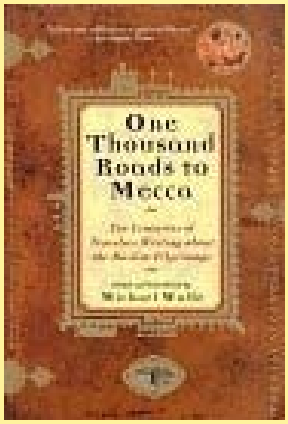

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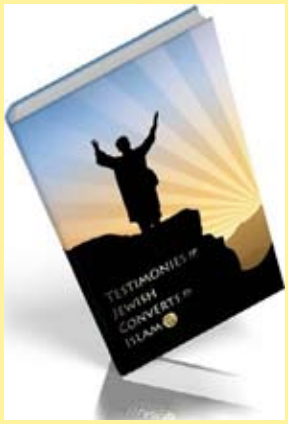

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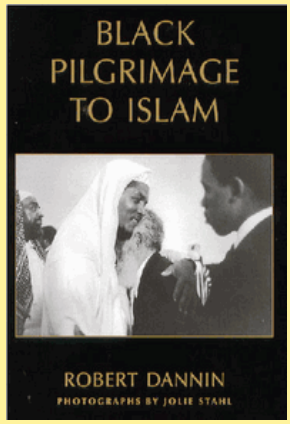

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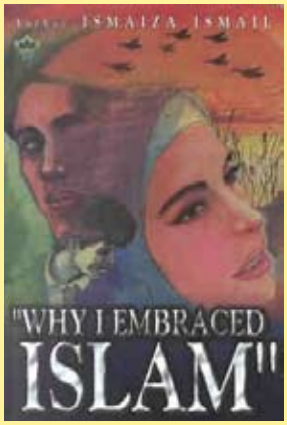

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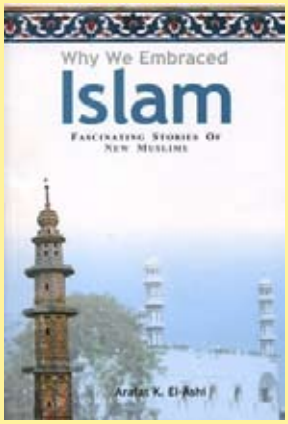

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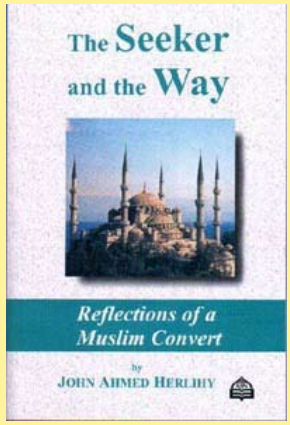

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AH – After Hijra. The zero point of the Islamic calendar corresponds to the Muslim Hijra (migration) from Makkah to Medina in July of the year 622 CE (AD). Subsequent dates were calculated according to the lunar calendar, which differs from the Julian calendar by roughly 10 days each year.

Adhan – The call to prayer pronounced loudly to indicate that the time of praying is due. And it is as follows:

Allah – God.

BH – Before Hijra.

Bint – Daughter of.

CE – "Common Era" or "Christian Era."

Da'awah – Preaching of Islam. (i.e. invite people to embrace Islam.)

Fard – Obligatory

Fatwa (Plural, Fatawa) - a religious opinion on Islamic law issued by an Islamic scholar.

Fitrah – The innate nature instilled by Allah as human birthright. Fitrah includes the recognition and understanding of Allah as Lord and Creator, and the inborn ability to discriminate between good and evil.

Haafidh – A memorizer of the Holy Qur'an.

Hadith – A tradition recording the words, actions, appearance, or implied consents of prophet Muhammad Ibn Abdullah.

Hajj – The annual Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah.

Halal – Permissible

Hanafi – Among the four established Sunni schools of legal thought in Islam, the Hanafi School is the oldest. The Hanafi madhhab is named after its founder, Abu Hanifa an-Nu'man ibn Thābit (699 - 767CE /89 - 157AH).

Haram – Forbidden

Hijra – The Muslim migration from Makkah to Medina in July of the year 622

Iblis – The proper name of the *Shaitan*

Ibn – Son of.

Imam – Leader of the prayer, being the one who goes out in front of the congregation.

InshaAllah – If Allah wishes.

Jizya – Head tax imposed by Islam on all non-Muslims living under the protection of an Islamic government.

Ka'abah – A square stone building in *Al-Masjid-al-Haram* (the great mosque at Makka) towards which all Muslims turn there faces in prayer.

Maghrib – Sunset, evening prayer.

Makkah – (aka Mecca, Bakka, Becca, Baca) The holy city to which Muslims make pilgrimage. The Kaba, to which Muslims direct prayers and the well of ZamZam is contained in the central, sacred mosque.

Mus'haf – Book.

Pbuh – Peace be Upon Him

Qiyama – The Day of Resurrection or the Day of Judgement.

Rakat – Interval of prayer

Sahaba – The companions of the prophet Muhammad.

Sahabi – Plural of *sahaba*

Salaf – The pious predecessors, referring to the first three generations following the messengership of Muhammad .

Salat – Prayer

Saum – Fasting

Shahada – Testimony of Islamic faith

Shaitan – Satan

Shari'a – Islamic law

Shayateen – Evil jinn, or devils

Subhanahu wa ta'ala – Praised and exalted is He (i.e. Allah)

Sunnah – the legal way or ways, orders, acts of worship and statements of Prophet Muhammad, that have become models to be followed by the Muslims.

Sunni – Orthodox sect of Islam, accounting for 95% of all Muslims.

Surah – Chapter of the Holy Qur'an.

Ummah – Nation

Umrah – A visit to Makka during which one performs the *Tawaf* around the Ka'ba and the *Sa'y* between As-Safa and Al-Marwa. It is also called 'lesser Hajj.'

Wudhu – Ablution (ritual washing perfomed in preparation for prayer)

Zakat – The poordue incumbent upon Muslims.

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Magazines

Reader's Digest
Muslim World League Journal
Billboard magazine
Emel Magazine
Arches (The bi-monthly Periodical of the Cordoba Foundation)
Journal Gazette
Time Magazine
Archaeology
Observer Sport Monthly
Religion & Ethics Newsweekly
Montreal Gazette.
Middle East Quarterly
Brussels Journal
TFM Page Magazine
Saudi Aramco World.
Foreign Policy
Mr Zine
Der Spiegel.
The New England Journal of Medicine
Scientific American
USC Health Magazine
Sports Illustrated
National Geographic
Monthly Review

Journals

Western Journal of Black Studies
Foreign Affairs

Broadcasts

Mike Wallace, 60 Minutes. CBS
Nightline. ABC
ABC News
PRESS TV
CBS News
BBC News
Fox News.
Compass ABC TV
Enough Rope ABC
TalkAsia. CNN
Aljazeera
Dubai Business Channel

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To my Readers

I'd really love to hear from you. If you have any comments, critiques or suggestions, this is the guy who tolerates them. If the book changed your perception or if it changed your life, I would appreciate if you tell me your story. To contact me, use the following address:

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